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FRAMING INCOME INEQUALITY IN THE MEDIA: IS THERE A LIBERAL OR NEOLIBERAL BIAS?

by

REBECCA JOLENE BYRNE

(Under the Direction of Ted Brimeyer)

ABSTRACT

This study is a quantitative content analysis that analyzes how *The New York Times* framed income inequality between 2006 and 2010. A thorough review of the literature regarding rising income inequality in the United States, media theory, framing, bias, cultural hegemony, liberal and neoliberal political trends, and social mobility precedes findings that media coverage of income inequality declined while inequality grew. Various neoliberal, liberal, and neutral frames are identified and examined for slant and bias. I find that while the *Times* has a slight liberal bias in framing income inequality, a neoliberal hegemonic discourse pervades how the issue is addressed. Finally, I address the significance of social mobility as an absent frame in the media's discourse on income inequality.

INDEX WORDS: Income inequality, Cultural hegemony, Media theory, Framing, Bias, Neoliberalism, Social Mobility

FRAMING INCOME INEQUALITY IN THE MEDIA: IS THERE A LIBERAL OR NEOLIBERAL BIAS?

by

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B.A., Armstrong Atlantic State University, 2005

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of Georgia Southern University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

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FRAMING INCOME INEQUALITY IN THE MEDIA: IS THERE A LIBERAL OR NEOLIBERAL BIAS?

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Electronic Version Approved:
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DEDICATION

For Liam – my son, my moon, my stars – in hopes that you do your own small part to make the world a more equal place. I cannot wait to see what wonderful things you accomplish.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

On September 17, 2011 hundreds of people gathered in New York City to protest the unprecedented level of income inequality in the United States (*The New York Times,* 2012). Months of ongoing protests in dozens of cities across America followed. This movement, called Occupy Wall Street, has been calling attention to the incredible income disparity between the very wealthiest and the rest of Americans with the meme "we are the 99 percent." As of 2009, the wealthiest 1% of U.S. households had net worth that was 225 times greater than the median or typical household's net worth in 2009 (EPI Briefing Paper, 2011). This is the highest ratio on record. Between 1979 and 2007, average after tax incomes for the top 1% rose by 281 percent, while rising only 25% for the middle fifth and merely 16% for the bottom fifth (CBPP Report, 2010, p. 165). From 1983 to 2009, the share of wealth for the bottom 80% of wealth holders declined from 18.7% to just 12.8%, meaning that the top 20% of wealth holders in the United States own 87.2% of America's wealth (EPI Briefing Paper, 2011). According to the Congressional Budget Office, the median annual income for men working full-time in 2009 was about $37,000, while workers in the 10th percentile earned just $17,800, and those in the 90th percentile earned $86,000 annually (CBO Study, 2011).

As the literature review that follows shows, despite recent protest movements, many Americans are unaware of the rise in income inequality over the last few decades (McCall, 2005). Popular explanations for income inequality emphasize either individual or structural explanations (Feagin, 1975; K. B. Smith & Stone, 1989). The media play an important role in drawing attention to social issues such as inequality. Through framing

and agenda setting, the media engages in both sensemaking and sensegiving by including, omitting, organizing, and interpreting information (Entman, 1993; Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes, & Sasson, 1992; McCombs & Shaw, 1972). The amount of news exposure a particular issue receives has a strong impact on what individuals believe are the most important social and political issues (Brosius & Kepplinger, 1990; Erbring, Goldenbert, & Miller, 1980; McCombs & Shaw, 1972; McLeod, Becker, & Byrnes, 1974; Shaw & McCombs, 1997). And while the media does not tell individuals what to *think*, it does influence *what they think about* (Anastasio, Rose, & Chapnam, 1999; Entman, 1989). Thus, it is important, not only to identify the way news media frame important issues, but to evaluate the objectivity or bias of media representations of social issues (Entman, 2007).

Media framing of income inequality is particularly important because of the ambivalence most American's have about the causes and remedies for income inequality (Kluegel, Csepeli, Kolosi, Orkeny, & Nemenyi, 1995). Media theories often focus on the role that elites, including journalists, play in promoting cultural hegemony by privileging the interests of elites over those of the middle and working class (Gitlin, 1980; Gramsci, 1971; Shoemaker & Mayfield, 1984). Politically, the shift from liberal toward neoliberal political ideology in the United States emphasizes individual explanations for inequality rather than structural explanations, something often reflected in media framing of the issue (de Goede, 1996; Harvey, 2005; Peet, 2002).

This study utilizes quantitative content analysis to evaluate how the media has framed income inequality between 2006 and 2010. First, I evaluate if the coverage the media has given to income inequality reflects the actual increase of inequality during

these years. Then I identify the various neoliberal, liberal, and neutral frames included in how the causes of and solutions for income inequality are represented. Next, I evaluate the articles for patterns of slant that might reveal a neoliberal or liberal bias. Finally, I address issues of cultural hegemony and the significance of social mobility as an absent frame in the media's discourse on income inequality.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE ON INCOME INEQUALITY

Inequality on the Rise

Income inequality has long been a social problem in the United States. The income gap has continued to grow rapidly since the 1970's. Between 1979 and 2007, average after tax incomes for the top 1% rose by 281 percent, while rising only 25% for the middle fifth and merely 16% for the bottom fifth (CBPP Report, 2010, p. 165). According to the Congressional Budget Office, the median annual income for men working full-time in 2009 was about $37,000, while workers in the 10th percentile earned just $17,800, and those in the 90th percentile earned $86,000 annually (CBO Study, 2011). Perhaps as concerning as the gap in earned income, the gap in wealth continues to grow as well. In 2009, the wealthiest one percent of U.S. households had a net worth that was 225 times greater than the typical household's net worth (EPI Briefing Paper, 2011). And in spite of the recession from 2007 to 2009, the gap in wealth has not significantly narrowed, in part because while the richest fifth of Americans saw average annual declines in wealth of 16%, the rest of Americans saw average declines of 25% (EPI Briefing Paper, 2011). According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (2010), there is a greater income concentration at the top of the income scale than at any time since 1928. And those who are at the top are likely to stay there, while those who are born to low-income families have a one percent chance of getting rich (Hertz, 2006). The United States has, not only one of the highest rates of income inequality in the developed world, but one of the lowest rates of intergenerational mobility (Garfinkel, Rainwater, & Smeeding, 2010; Hertz, 2006; Solon, 2002).

American's Attitudes Toward Inequality

A sparse but growing body of literature seeks to determine the degree to which the American public is aware of the rise in income inequality, as well as their attitudes toward it. McCall (2005) suggests that there are three reasons Americans may not be fully aware of, or concerned about, the growing income gap in the United States. First, Americans experience what McCall terms "normative ambiguity," meaning conflicting beliefs surrounding the fairness of income distribution, the role of inequality in motivating individuals to succeed, and society's obligation to redistribute wealth.

Americans generally believe that income inequality motivates people to succeed, creating greater wealth and productivity, despite evidence to the contrary (Garfinkel, et al., 2010; Kluegel & Smith, 1986; Osberg, Smeeding, & Schwabish, 2004). However, while some level of inequality is considered acceptable, this belief coincides with a - sometimes contradictory - desire for equity (Kluegel & Smith, 1986). Emphasis on the importance of personal responsibility and meritocracy lead most Americans to embrace norms of differentiation in the economic realm, even though they express support for norms of egalitarianism in the social and political realms (Hochschild, 1981).

Second, income inequality is a highly abstract concept with vague and shifting definitions (McCall, 2005). Who, exactly, falls into the "middle class" in comparison to the "wealthy" and "poor?" Third, the link between redistributive government policies and reducing inequality is tenuous in the minds of many, leading to confusion and apathy regarding the causes, consequences, and remedies for inequality (McCall, 2005). For example, Kluegel et al. (1995) find that individuals are likely to support both egalitarian

positions such as redistribution according to need and inegalitarian positions that blame the poor for their plight simultaneously.

In general, Americans have a higher tolerance for income inequality than the people of other wealthy nations (Garfinkel, et al., 2010; McCall, 2005; Osberg & Smeeding, 2006; Xu & Carand, 2010). Scholars have also found that Americans' awareness of inequality does not parallel empirical trends (McCall, 2005; Xu & Carand, 2010). Individuals who live in states with higher levels of inequality are more aware of national inequality, but this primarily applies to those with lower incomes (Xu & Carand, 2010). Wealthy individuals (those in the top quintile and top decile) are less likely to be aware of rising inequality, and they are less likely to perceive it as a problem (McCall, 2005; Osberg & Smeeding, 2006; Xu & Carand, 2010). Ironically, Americans are less aware of the extent of inequality at the top of the income distribution (Osberg & Smeeding, 2006). Additionally, political knowledge does not automatically translate into grater awareness of the large increase in income inequality (Xu & Carand, 2010). While there is a trend over time toward greater tolerance of inequality in the distribution of earnings, there is also a growing polarization between those who find income inequality acceptable and those who do not (McCall, 2005; Osberg & Smeeding, 2006). McCall (2005) found that Democrats and liberals were significantly more likely to object to current levels of inequality compared to Republicans and conservatives.

The single biggest predictor of individual opposition to inequality is perception of chances for mobility (McCall, 2005). Those who feel their standard of living is likely to improve are significantly more tolerant of inequality than those who do not. Significantly, despite the fact that America has one of the most static rates of mobility compared to

other wealthy nations, only a small minority of Americans are aware of this fact (Hertz, 2006; McCall, 2005; Solon, 2002).

American's Attitudes Toward Poverty and Wealth

Individuals' beliefs about the causes for wealth and poverty are closely related to their attitudes toward income inequality. Popular explanations for poverty typically place responsibility either on the individual, on the structure of society, or on fatalistic and divine forces (Brimeyer, 2008; Feagin, 1975). One popular, and powerful, explanation for poverty is embodied in the "perversity thesis" (Somers & Block, 2005). This concept shifts the blame for poverty from structural conditions to individual failure. Such individual explanations for poverty have been linked to political conservatism (Wagstaff, 1983; Zucker & Weiner, 1993) and are more likely to be held by whites, members of the middle-class, and conservative Protestants (Bullock, 1999; Hunt, 2004; Zucker & Weiner, 1993). Structural explanations for poverty and inequality are more likely to be held by minorities, women, mainline Protestants and Catholics, and members of lower social classes (Bobo, 1991; Kluegel & Smith, 1986). However, it is worth noting that structural explanations for poverty frequently coexist with individual explanations (Hochschild, 1995; Hunt, 2004; Kluegel & Smith, 1986).

Similarly, people tend to explain wealth as having been acquired through individual merit rather than through structural factors (K. B. Smith & Stone, 1989). Family inheritance, social advantages, and elite educational opportunities are not as frequently cited when explaining wealth as are talent and hard work (Kluegel & Smith, 1986; K. B. Smith & Stone, 1989). Such individual attributions for wealth make it more likely that people will support government policies that benefit the wealthy, even if such

policies do not benefit themselves (Bullock & Fernald, 2005; Gilens, 1999; Limbert & Bullock, 2009). The emphasis on individual rather than structural causes for inequality is one of the reasons many Americans believe that some level of inequality is fair, although people frequently underestimate the extent of income inequality in the United States (McCall, 2005; Osberg & Smeeding, 2006).

Income Inequality in the Media

Champlin and Knoedler (2008) note that media coverage of income inequality has frequently been inadequate, either ignoring causal interpretations and solutions, or pointing to the seemingly inevitable and uncontrollable forces of globalization and rapid technological change. They identify three general themes cited by the news media regarding the declining fortunes of the middle class, including: the failure of the poor and middle class to adapt to impersonal economic trends, bad government and trade policy exacerbate these economic trends, and tax policies have favored the rich at the expense of the middle class and the poor (Champlin & Knoedler, 2008). They conclude that the media chooses to frame the discussion of income inequality and the economic plight of the middle class in such a way as to avoid analyzing the long-term implications of the current economic system or to consider possible solutions to the problem.

In a content analysis of newspaper representations of welfare reform and dividend tax cuts, Limbert and Bullock (2009) suggest "references to 'seniors' and 'welfare recipients' acted as code words, with the former eliciting favorable associations (i.e., White, middle class, honest, hard worker) and the latter activating devalued social identities (i.e., African American, poor, single mother, lazy). Thus, social-economic policies were framed in a way that suggested tax cuts would go to the deserving while

welfare was being distributed to the undeserving poor. The way these two issues were framed encouraged support for tax cuts that benefited elites while diminishing support for progressive welfare policies that benefited the poor.

In a study examining the effects of framing on individuals' attitudes toward eliminating the dividend tax, participants were less supportive of eliminating the dividend tax when it was framed as benefiting the wealthy, but more supportive when the tax cut was framed as benefiting the general public (Bullock & Fernald, 2005). However, pre-existing attitudes toward the rich had a significant mediating effect on framing effects.

In examining media framing of the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts, Bell and Entman (2011) found that tax cuts benefiting the wealthy were framed by the media as benefiting all Americans, despite the reality that they overwhelmingly benefited the wealthy. The study also found that the majority of news stories were strongly slanted toward favoring the tax cuts, creating a bias that lent credibility to claims that the tax cuts were necessary while discrediting or silencing dissenting opinions. Finally, issues of equality and inequality were simply left out of the frame all together.

While the episodic nature of news reporting might lead us to expect a strong emphasis on individual causes and solutions to social problems, a recent content analysis of media representation of poverty found that the media tends to emphasize social rather than individual solutions, perhaps because of journalists' personal political views or because of external events relating to the timing of coverage (Kim, Carvalho, & Davis, 2010).

Finally, to evaluate whether the media has given sufficient attention to growing income inequality, McCall (2005) examined the frequency of articles in three

newsweeklies that addressed the subject between 1980 and 2000. She found that media coverage did not reflect objective trends in inequality over that time period.

CHAPTER 3
THEORY

Framing, Agenda Setting, and Sensemaking

Connecting the public's attitudes toward income inequality with media framing effects, Kluegel, et al., believe that the ambivalence created by American's conflicting attitudes toward the government's role in remedying income inequality "presents a fertile ground for framing effects as political actors compete to make salient either the social explanations of poverty and wealth in support of redistribution or the individual explanations to motivate opposition to the welfare state" (1995, p. 206).

Framing is the process by which actors "select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (Entman, 1993, p. 52). Framing allows communicators and audiences to use a common vocabulary to understand and interpret complex issues. However, it is important to note that framing is not a natural or neutral process, but is the result of specific decisions on the part of an actor as to *how* an issue should be addressed, and *what* should be included or omitted within the discussion (for an example of how this process might occur, see Lester, 1980).

Another way to understand framing is to see it as "the construction of an agenda with a restricted number of thematically related attributes in order to create a coherent picture of a particular object" (McCombs & Ghanem, 2001, p. 70). Issue salience is the relative perceived importance of a problem; framing affects the salience of the issue and its various elements (Entman, 1993; Erbring, et al., 1980). Agenda setting is the process

by which journalists select and highlight certain issues while ignoring others (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Framing and agenda setting have been linked, because both have a powerful effect on the salience of issues and their attributes (McCombs & Ghanem, 2001).

Because sensemaking is a way of organizing information about the world by using schemas and interpreting salient information, researchers are beginning to see framing and sensemaking as similar processes that provide a means to organize ideas and events in an understandable way (Fiss & Hirsch, 2005; Gamson, et al., 1992). However, the power of media framing lies in that, not only is it a process of *sensemaking*, it is also a process of *sensegiving* (Fiss & Hirsch, 2005; Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). Framing allows specific aspects of an issue to be highlighted, while downplaying or omitting others. In this way, the media has the power to influence what individuals think, including their political and social opinions, by affecting *what* exactly they think about (Entman, 1989).

Peet (2002) suggests that Gramsci's (1971) notion of cultural hegemony (see discussion below) as the prevailing commonsense beliefs of a culture that shape the collective consciousness can be applied to understanding the influential power of the media. Peet's explanation below is strongly reminiscent of the agenda setting and framing theories:

> The *hegemonic depth* of a discourse—its intensive regulatory power—resides in its ability to restrict serious, "responsible" consideration to a limited range of topics and approaches or, more generally, an ability to specify the parameters of the practical, realistic, and sensible among linked groups of theoreticians, policy-makers, and practitioners. (p. 57)

Bias in Media Framing

Because language is inherently evaluative in nature, some believe that bias in the media is unavoidable (Geis, 1991). Since researchers have found that the media "subtly but powerfully create the very opinions they seek to reflect" (Anastasio, et al., 1999, p. 152), it is important for social scientists to identify and make known any bias or slant found when the media frame social issues. Some scholars suggest that journalists' personal political tendencies, which tend to be liberal, bias their reporting (Goldberg, 2002), although others have found that journalists tend to be more conservative on economic issues than the general public, leading them to be more supportive of neoliberal ideology that benefits elites (Croteau, 1998; de Goede, 1996; Kollmeyer, 2004). Much scholarship has focused on the effects of the media's reliance on funding from advertisers and the consolidation of corporate interests, finding that news reporting tends to be distorted by capitalist and conservative interests (Bennett, 1990; Champlin & Knoedler, 2002, 2008; Entman, 2004; Herman & Chomsky, 1988). For example, content analysis of economic reporting has revealed that the news media privilege the interests of corporations and investors over the interests of the general work force in their reporting (Kollmeyer, 2004).

Finally, some maintain that the media is generally neutral in its reporting. In analyzing newspaper coverage of political party switchers, Niven (2003) examined the relative frequency of positive, negative, and neutral statements made regarding each candidate in search of bias, and found little bias for or against either party. Fogarty (2005) suggests that while the media is not objective when reporting economic news,

journalists focus on negative news regardless of which political party this might aid or disadvantage.

When framing the issue of poverty, conservative papers placed more emphasis on individual causes and solutions than did liberal papers (Kim, et al., 2010). This is in line with a study conducted by Covert and Wasburn (2007) that analyzed the bias of mainstream, conservative, and liberal magazine's coverage of social issues. They found that the political bias of conservative and liberal magazines was reflected in the framing of social issues, while framing of these issues in mainstream magazines was more balanced.

To connect the concepts of framing and agenda setting with bias, Entman proposes using the term *slant* (2007). Slant is used in reference to specific media reports and editorials "in which framing favors on side over the other in a current or potential debate," whereas *bias* takes the form of "consistent patterns in the framing of mediated communication that promote the influence of one side in conflicts over the use of government power" (Entman, 2007, pp. 165, 166). In short, slant refers to privileging one frame over another within a specific unit, such as an article, while bias refers to a pattern of slant within many articles over time. Entman cautions against simply counting each instance of support or opposition for a particular government action when measuring slant, because priming effects exert different weight for different positions.

Media Theory and Cultural Hegemony

In evaluating sociological theories regarding the media, Shoemaker and Mayfield (1984) identify five theoretical approaches: (1) the mirror approach, (2) routines of newsgathering, (3) journalist-centered approach, (4) social/institutional influence, and (5)

the hegemonic approach. The mirror approach suggests that the news media accurately reports on, and is thus a reflection of, reality. Shoemaker and Mayfield (1984) found little support for this theory, as have others since in areas ranging from the challenges facing working women in need of child care, reports of the avian flu epidemic, and economic news coverage (Abeysinghe & White, 2010; Albanese, et al., 2010; Fogarty, 2005).

The routines of newsgathering, the journalist-centered approach, and the social/institutional influence theories can all be combined under the hegemonic approach (Shoemaker & Mayfield, 1984). First conceived of by Antonio Gramsci, hegemony is part of the two major superstructural levels that serve to impose the ideology of the elite on the "great masses of the population" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 12). In contrast to direct domination, which is a function of the State, hegemony is a function of the major institutions of civil society; it creates "spontaneous" consent to the structural inequalities within society through the penetration of elite ideology into the common sense and everyday practices of subordinate classes (Gitlin, 1980; Gramsci, 1971; Shoemaker & Mayfield, 1984). It is the very subtle but ubiquitous nature of hegemony that makes it so powerful in promoting the ideas and cultural norms supportive of the existing socioeconomic order.

Extending the concept of hegemony to the role of the media, scholars have found that the media serves to promote the interests of economic and political elites under the guise of objectivity, while deliberately conflating the interests of the elites with those of workers and others outside the elite class (Bell & Entman, 2011; Gans, 1979; Gitlin, 1980; Habermas, 1991; Kollmeyer, 2004). In this way, the media acts as propaganda that manufactures consent for the current economic system (Herman & Chomsky, 1988;

Parenti, 1993). Just as Gramsci (1971, p. 12) defines the role of intellectuals in society as the dominant group's "deputies" that promote ideas and cultural norms supportive of elite interests, the media acts as a deputy that frames and disseminates these ideas and norms. In reviewing the following theories regarding the news media, it is easy to see how each one emphasizes the power of elites to portray economic and social issues in ways that ideologically justify the current economic system, falling under the overarching theoretical umbrella of cultural hegemony.

The routine of newsgathering approach analyzes the way news is gathered and the professional norms that dictate what constitutes news and how it is to be reported (Breed, 1955; Clayman & Reisner, 1998; Tuchman, 1978; White, 1950). The routines news workers use to identify the newsworthy character of occurrences and events rely on the ongoing and reflexive processes that take place as reporters and editors determine how a story will be framed (Lester, 1980). Researchers have found that journalists rely heavily on information from elite economic, government, and political sources in their reporting, while consulting labor unions and civic organizations less frequently (Croteau & Hoynes, 2001; William & Singletary, 1981). While some believe that the professional norms of newsgathering are designed to ensure objectivity, others have argued that these norms act to constrain journalists from expressing views counter to the interests of corporate and political elites (Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Reese, 1990).

The journalist-centered approach suggests that the personal biases of journalists influence media representation of social and economic issues. Initially, research in this area focused on the idea that journalists as a whole tend to have liberal political views, which in turn lead them to framing issues with a left-leaning bias (Goldberg, 2002;

Rothman & Lichter, 1982). However, a 1998 (Croteau) analysis of survey data revealed that while journalists tend to be liberal on social issues, they are more conservative than the general public on economic issues. Herman and Chomsky (1988) state that many reporters internalize elite corporate and government interests and values as they are rewarded with success for expressing these views – and labeled as ideological or aberrant when they do not.

Discounting the idea that journalists are likely to promote a liberal agenda, scholars have suggested that journalists themselves are part of the "power elite," a ruling class of individuals with shared economic interests which shape their cultural and political views (Kollmeyer, 2004; Mills, 1956). In support of this position, Champlin and Knoedler (2008) reference a survey that found half the journalists polled had incomes exceeding $100,000. These journalists also viewed economic conditions to be more favorable than did the general public (Champlin & Knoedler, 2008; Croteau, 1998). As part of the power elite, journalists would be inclined to justify the current economic system and resulting income inequality (Kollmeyer, 2004).

The social/institutional influence theories focus on factors other than individual journalistic bias, such as the economic reliance of the media on advertising revenue and the ownership structure of the media (Gitlin, 1980; Kollmeyer, 2004; Shoemaker & Mayfield, 1984). Advertisers have the power to influence media content, either by requiring media outlets to write editorial copy that they find supportive, or by refusing to advertise in media outlets that express views counter to their interests (Champlin & Knoedler, 2002).

Considerable criticism has followed the growing monopolization of all forms of media into media giants. As of 1990, only twenty-three corporations controlled most of the business in the news media, a significant decline from forty-six corporations in 1983 (Bagdikian, 1990). Of those outlets, the vast majority of the news media market is controlled by "The Big Six," including AOL-Time Warner, Disney, Viacom, NewsCorp, Bertelsmann, and General Electric [Comcast]; this means that control over access to the "critical pipelines of information" is more centralized than ever (Champlin & Knoedler, 2002, p. 461). As media becomes more monopolized by a small group of powerful companies, the news becomes more about "info-tainment" and self-promotion (or self-protection) than about serving the public interests (Champlin & Knoedler, 2002). Arguing that as corporations control greater and greater shares of the media industry with less and less competition, Champlin and Knoedler (2008) assert that news media coverage is determined by profit motive rather than public interest. This position is in line with Bagdikian's (1990) assertion that the news media is under pressure to produce the same rates of profits that the other entertainment divisions of their umbrella corporations do. Additionally, the consolidation of multiple media outlets under one corporation ensures a captive audience and reinforces the hegemonic power of the elites (Bagdikian, 1990; Gamson, et al., 1992).

Competing Political Hegemonic Discourses

It is important to note that many scholars question the existence of one single hegemony (Gamson, et al., 1992). Instead, they suggest that alternative and oppositional hegemonic discourses compete for dominance in society (Williams, 1977). Kellner (1990) states that different classes and social groups are engaged in a struggle to impose

their visions, interests, and agendas on society as a whole. Thus, multiple hegemonic forces can be in contest with one another at any given time. This more flexible view of hegemony deviates from Gramsci's basic premise that cultural hegemony serves to justify economic systems that promote elite interests, but it offers a point of entry for understanding how multiple ideologies can coexist within a society.

In examining hegemonic beliefs regarding income inequality, it is necessary to examine the shift in political ideology from liberal Keynesian to neoliberal economic practices. Demand-side economics, rooted in Keynes Law that "demand creates its own supply," became the primary political-economic approach in the United States following the first World War (Garfinkel, et al., 2010; Keynes, 1958). Keynesian economic ideology emphasizes the importance of a mixed economy in which government actively promotes employment, regulates industry, invests in infrastructure, and provides social services. Liberal, (politically left-leaning) ideology embraces Keynesian economics as a part of the promotion of the welfare state[1] (Garfinkel, et al., 2010; Huber & Stephens, 2001). Defined as "a unique blend of capitalism and socialism," welfare states extend the metaphor of family transfers of wealth from the able to the needy to encompass collective transfers of wealth within a society (Garfinkel, et al., 2010, p. 2). The benefits of the welfare state "exceed costs, which is the primary reason why all rich nations have large welfare states" (Garfinkel, et al., 2010, p. 3). Garfinkel, et al (2010) make the argument that while too much socialism within a mixed-economy will disincentivize work and slow growth, over reliance on the free market to determine economic outcomes will inevitably result in some individuals suffering from the resulting "creative distruction" (Schumpter,

[1] It is a mark of how powerful the neoliberal hegemony is that even mentioning the "welfare state" brings to mind a number of negative images and connotations.

1942). They note that social safety nets increase the fairness of the system and quell discontent, leading to stability and growth . In addition, welfare states reduce the economic insecurity inherent in capitalism, leading individuals to take more economic and entrepreneural risks. Finally, investments in public education, as a part of welfare state redistribution policies, have been widely recognized to promote economic growth (Barro, 2001).

In elaborating the underlying moral justification for liberal political-economic philosophy as embodied by the social democratic welfare state, Walzer (2010) emphasizes the abolition of poverty, rather than merely providing relief, as the objective. Unlike Marxism, the welfare state seeks to promote equality through redistribution without revolution. Due to the modern characteristics of society, such as the mobility of populations, the isolation of the poor from the view of others into segregated urban ghettos or isolated rural communities, and the large scale in which public relief is needed, the state is far better equipped to provide public relief than charity. And, while charity turns the poor into "permanent supplicants of well-to-do patrons," simultaneously demeaning the poor and creating dependence, state supported job training, schooling, and day care serve as a means of empowering the poor while fostering independence (Walzer, 2010, p. 289). While the state is the necessary agent of self-help in the achievement of poverty relief, democracy is vital to protecting the interests of the people from excessive or abusive state authority.

Since the 1970s, neoliberal political-economic ideology and practices have dominated policy in the United States (Harvey, 2005). Based upon the belief that deregulation, privatization, trade liberalization, and ending social welfare programs are

key to maximizing market efficiency, neoliberalism is rooted in the idea that human well-being is dependent upon capitalism as a means to create wealth and prosperity. Classical liberal thinkers promoted a hierarchy of means for the alleviation of poverty, placing personal responsibility and self-help at the top, followed by "mutual aid" to one another, followed by charity, and positioning redistribution policies at the bottom as a last resort (Palmer, 2010). Although welfare state intervention was strongly frowned upon and criticized as a form of state compulsion, classical liberals did allow for the state provision to the poor and indigent.

Milton Friedman, for example, advocated state compulsion in forcing individuals to buy annuities as a way to provide for their own old age, justifying it on the grounds that otherwise the elderly would become a burden to society (Friedman, 1962, p. 188). Friedman also recognized the limits of charity in providing relief to the poor, suggesting that society as a whole benefits from not being "distressed by the sight of poverty," while only those who give charity pay the costs (p. 191). Since alleviating poverty is classified as a public good, Friedman found it acceptable for the state to use legal compulsion to force taxpayers to support those in need (Palmer, 2010). Hayek, too, recognized that "there are common needs that can be satisfied only by collective action," including providing for health, education, and aid to the indigent, unfortunate, and disabled (Hayek, 1960; Palmer, 2010).

However, the primary focus of classical liberalism (and neoliberalism) is not reducing inequality or alleviating poverty, but creating wealth. Conflating the concept of "freedom" with the concept of "economic freedom" and rooted in Say's Law that "supply creates its own demand," the rhetoric of supply-side economics turns capitalism into a

moral imperative (Friedman, 1962; Harvey, 2005). The morality of supply-side economics has been framed in multiple ways, from Adam Smith's (1937) position that pursuing individual self-interest inevitably leads to promoting the interests of society to Hayek's (1976) argument that capitalism is the only moral political-economic system because all other systems are coercive. Gilder (1981) went so far as to suggest that the morality of supply-side economics rests in the altruism of entrepreneurial activity. In his argument, investors are giving a "gift," since there is no guarantee of a return.

Neoliberal political thought is rooted in classical liberalism, but with an even more adamant insistence on deregulation and privatization of previously state-run enterprises (Harvey, 2005). The neoliberal insistence on governance based on market criteria has lead to the devaluation of political liberty, equality, substantive citizenship, and the rule of law (Brown, 2006). Beginning in the 1980's protecting the poor from being pushed into dependency became the neoliberal moral justification for ending social services (de Goede, 1996). While classical liberal philosophy allowed for limited state intervention in providing a social safety net, or "a floor under the standard of life of every person in the community" (Friedman, 1962, p. 191), neoliberal thought has sought to demonize the welfare state and the poor who benefit from it (de Goede, 1996; Peet, 2002).

Neoliberalism characterizes individual success or failure as a result of virtuous entrepreneurial effort or personal failings, denying any social or structural influence on outcomes (Harvey, 2005). Thus, the wealthy are viewed as virtuous and deserving while the poor are morally suspect at best. "The Law of Unintended Consequences," or the belief that welfare created an incentive for the poor to avoid work in order to receive government support, become one of the most influential arguments of neoliberal scholars

(de Goede, 1996; Gilder, 1981; Murray, 1984). This ideological position has had a lasting impact on American social policy, starting with Regan's attack on poor women, who characterized them as "welfare queens," and continuing into the welfare cutbacks of the Clinton era (de Goede, 1996; Garfinkel, et al., 2010; Harvey, 2005; Limbert & Bullock, 2009).

CHAPTER 4

METHOD

Research Questions

Q1: Does coverage given to income inequality in *The New York Times* from 2006 – 2010 reflect the empirical rise in inequality during the same time period, as measured by the number of articles that address the topic?

Q2: How does the media define "income inequality"?

A. Does the framing of income inequality include salient information about the growing gap between the wealthy and the middle class and poor?

B. Does the frame include relevant information about the lack of socioeconomic mobility for Americans during the five year period examined?

Q3: How does *The New York Times* frame the causes of income inequality?

Q4: What solutions are included in the framing of income inequality?

Q5: Is there evidence for a liberal or neoliberal hegemony in how income inequality is framed as measured by the ratio of liberal to neoliberal causes and solutions mentioned over the course of the five-year period?

Q6: Is there evidence for a liberal or a neoliberal bias in *The New York Times* when addressing the issue of income inequality as measured by the frequency each article is slanted toward a liberal, neoliberal, or neutral position?

Sample

To answer the research questions, I identified all articles in *The New York Times* that contained the words "income" and "inequality" through a Lexis-Nexis Academic search. I chose to analyze *The New York Times* because it is widely recognized as a paper of national prominence and wide circulation, and it is an agenda-setter for other newspapers (Blood & Phillips, 1995; Fogarty, 2005; 2006). Initially, 529 articles were identified. I removed duplicates, articles that addressed inequality in countries other than the Unite States, and articles that were not about income inequality. Because I wanted to analyze articles that reflected the views of the paper, editorials were included but letters to the editor were not (Albanese, et al., 2010; Muschert & Carr, 2006). This left 234 articles to analyze.

Coding

In line with Entman's (1993) definition of framing, articles were examined to determine (1) the problem definition, (2) the causal interpretation, and/or (3) treatment recommendations. A literature review of articles related to media representations of poverty, income inequality, and wealth turned up several items that could initially be included in the codebook. A test run conducted with articles on income inequality in *The Washington Post* published during the same five-year period and *The New York Times* articles on income inequality published in years prior to the sample revealed several other items that were also included in the codebook. Each article was coded to determine if any of the problem definitions, causal interpretations, and treatment recommendations were mentioned in the article. Any references to the above were counted only once, no matter how many times they are mentioned in the article, to avoid inflating the number of

mentions overall. Table 1 provides detailed information on the specific causes and treatments included in the coding process.

Articles were also analyzed for *slant* (Entman, 2007). For the purposes of coding, *slant* is defined as *privileging one frame over another, either overtly or subtly by emphasizing the validity of one cause, moral assumption, or solution over another.* Similar to the approach taken by other researchers who addressed slant or bias in media (Covert & Wasburn, 2007) I used "common sense" and hegemonic definitions of *liberal* and *neoliberal* that reflect how I believe the politically interested and astute might understand these terms relative to a specific space (the United States) and time (2006 - 2010). Because of the limitations inherent in relying on the number of times a frame is referenced or a source is cited (Covert & Wasburn, 2007; Entman, 2007), I took a holistic approach to determining if the article was slanted toward one frame or another. Table 2 lists the specific definitions used when determining slant.

Reliability

A second coder analyzed 30 documents to ascertain reliability (Lacy & Riffe, 1996). In order to establish inter-rater reliability, I calculated the percentage agreement for each frame (Neuendorf, 2002). Percentage agreement for definitions ranged from 80 to 100 percent. Percentage agreement for causes and solutions ranged from 86.7% to 100% and 86.7% to 100% respectively. Slant agreement ranged from 83.6% to 86.7%. A complete list of inter-rater reliability percentages can be found in Appendix C.

Table 1. *Casual Interpretation and Treatment Recommendation Frames*

Causal Interpretation *Who/what is causing the problem?*	**Treatment Recommendation** *How should the problem be solved?*
Individual Causes Lazy/lack motivation/lack talent/lack discipline, Lack education, Broken family, Disability, Make bad decisions, Drug abuse/criminal activity, Abuse/depend on social programs, Highly motivated/work hard, Exceptional talent, Make good decisions, Comes from a good family, Quality educational attainment	**Individual Solution** Education attainment, Work harder, Get/stay married/family planning, Make better decisions, Individual philanthropy
Societal Causes Culture of poverty, Discrimination/racism, Changing demographics of region/nation, Immigration, Changing societal norms (inequality more acceptable)	**Societal Solution** Community action, Charity action
Political Causes Taxes burden wealthy/business or unfairly benefit middle class/poor, Taxes burden middle class/poor or unfairly benefit wealthy/business, Welfare/social programs create dependency, Welfare/social programs are insufficient, Education policies, Political favors or advantages, Economic/business regulation - too much, Economic/business regulation - not enough, Health care policy inadequate, Right wing/elite conspiracy, Left wing conspiracy/class warfare	**Political Solution** Tax cuts for the wealthy/business (or maintain cuts), Tax cuts for middle class/poor, progressive tax structure, increase for wealthy, Create more jobs, Reform government aid programs (more aid), Reform government aid programs (less aid/require more work), Privatize social security/reduce benefits/raise retirement age, Protect/expand social security, Raise minimum wage, Boost economy (general), Improve school quality, Improve access to higher education, Control outsourcing, globalization, etc, Protect union/worker rights, Regulate business practices, Health care reform
Economic/Business Causes Globalization, Maximizing profits, General greed, Reckless behavior of business, Abusive behavior of business, Rise in unemployment, Slow job growth, Technology eliminating jobs, Unions demand too much, Unions declining in power, Stagnating wages, Inflation	**Economic/Businesses Solution** Limit outsourcing, globalization, etc, Respect union/worker rights, Regulate practices
Fatalistic Causes Luck, God's will	**Problem can not be solved/ is inevitable** Result of capitalism, Result of human nature/condition
Cause is complex /too complex to explain	**Problem should not be solved/is not a problem** Does not really exist, Is a good thing

Table 2. *Definitions of Liberal and Neoliberal Bias*

Liberal causes: Structural, unequal opportunity, poor education opportunity, inheritance advantages, government deregulation of business, tax cuts for wealthy, declining power of unions, poor wages	*Neoliberal causes*: Individual attainment, individual failure, market efficiency, too much government intervention
Liberal solutions: restructure tax code, limit inheritance through taxes, increase minimum wages, increase business regulation, empower unions, improve education opportunities	*Neoliberal solutions:* Government should stay out of business, trickle down economics, deregulate business, cut taxes for all, eliminate union control, improve education attainment
Liberal moral assumptions: government should play a hand in eliminating inequality, capitalism should be moderated/regulated, not everyone has the same opportunities, extreme inequality is immoral, privileging equality	*Neoliberal assumptions:* pursuit of happiness paramount, keeping what one earns is fair, welfare corrupts, unregulated markets are ideal, everyone in America has the same opportunities, privileging capitalism

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

Table 3 shows the total number of articles that included references to "income inequality" that were included in the framing analysis. Articles were coded *primary* if the focus was primarily on income inequality and *secondary* if the article addressed inequality as a significant cause or effect related to the main issue of the article. Articles were coded as *tertiary* if they only mentioned income inequality in passing, but were not about income inequality and did not address the issue fully.

Figure 1 presents the total number of news stories that were coded as either primary or secondary. Figure 2 shows the income gap among men from 2005 – 2009, the years journalists would have likely been basing their current analysis of inequality on, while Figure 3 demonstrates the growing gap in wealth inequality between 1962 and 2009. While both income inequality and wealth inequality grew, the number of articles addressing the issue significantly decreased from 2006 to 2009, with only a slight upturn during 2010. Clearly, in response to the first research question (**Q1**), newspaper coverage of income inequality between 2006 and 2010 does not correlate to the rise in inequality as measured by the number of articles that address the issue.

Table 3. *Focus of Articles*

Focus	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Primary	27	22	6	1	9
Secondary	22	23	28	6	8
Tertiary	23	18	17	9	15
N	**52**	**63**	**51**	**16**	**32**

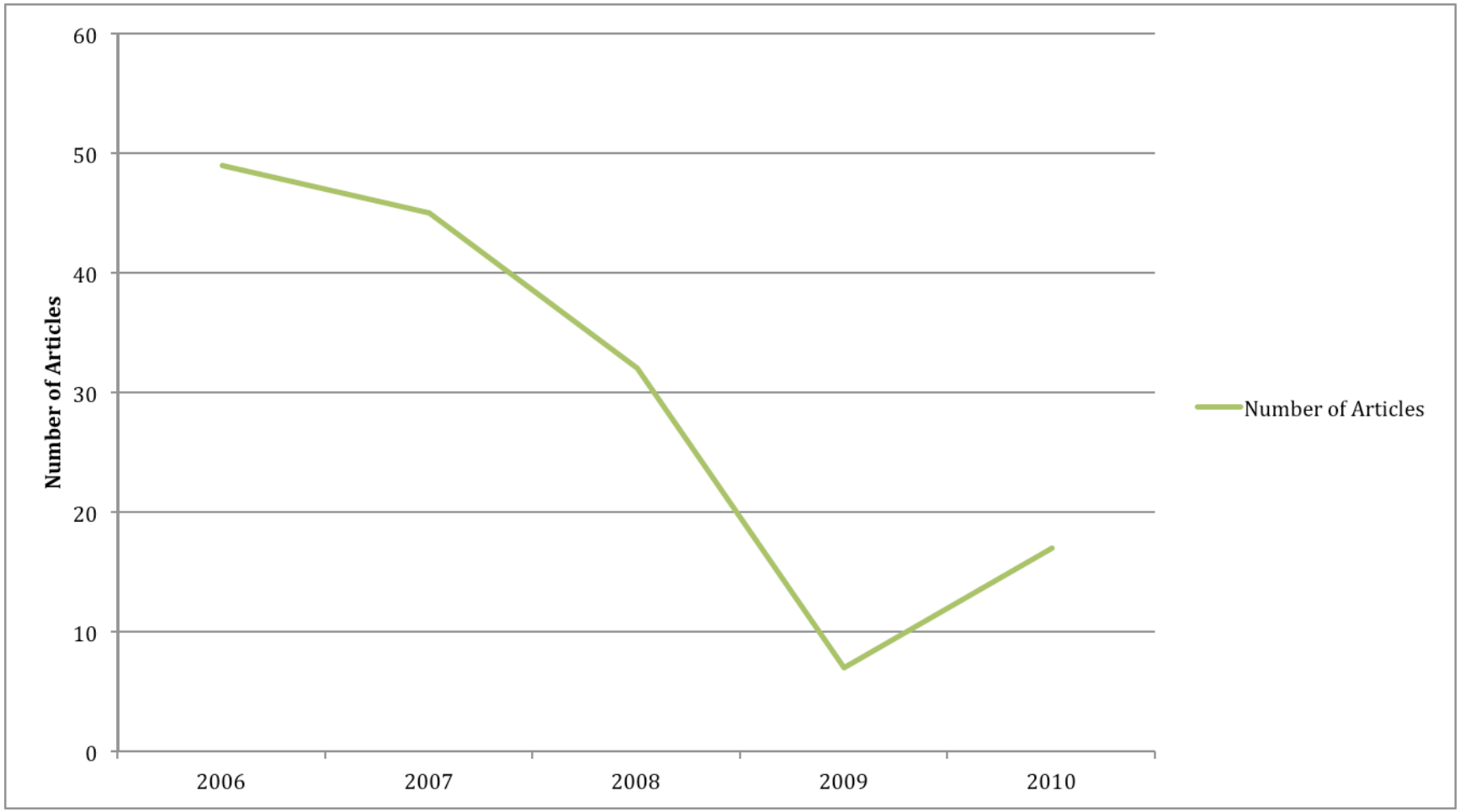

Figure 1. *Income Inequality Coverage in The New York Times, 2006 – 2010*

Note: The number of articles coded as *primary* or *secondary* that addressed income inequality in *The New York Times* between 2006 and 2010. Articles that included "income inequality" as key words but did not directly address income inequality in the United States are not included.

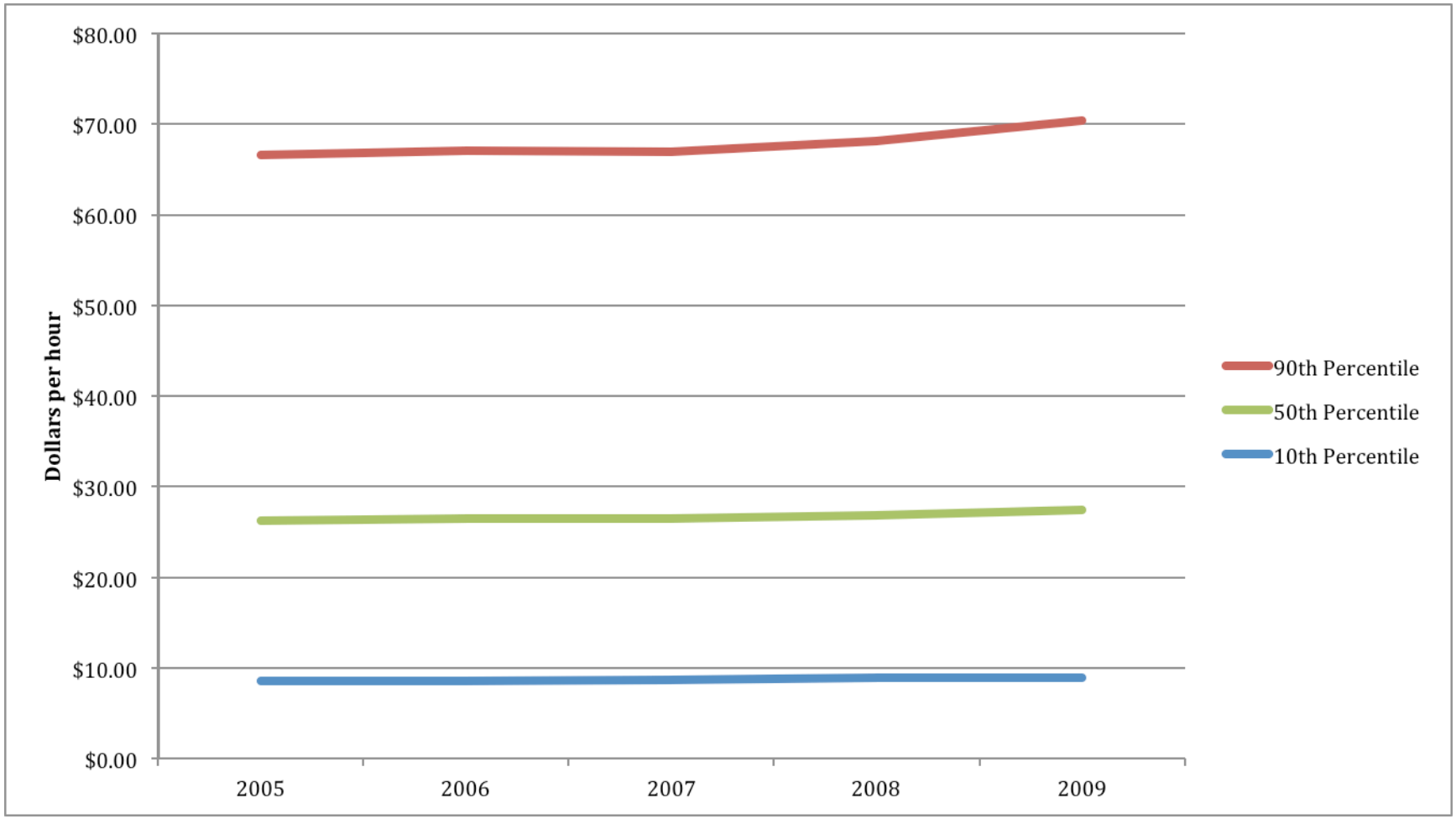

Figure 2. *Hourly wages at selected percentiles for men, 2005 – 2009*

Source: Congressional Budget Office 2011
(http://www.cbo.gov/ftpdocs/120xx/doc12051/02-16-WageDispersion.pdf)

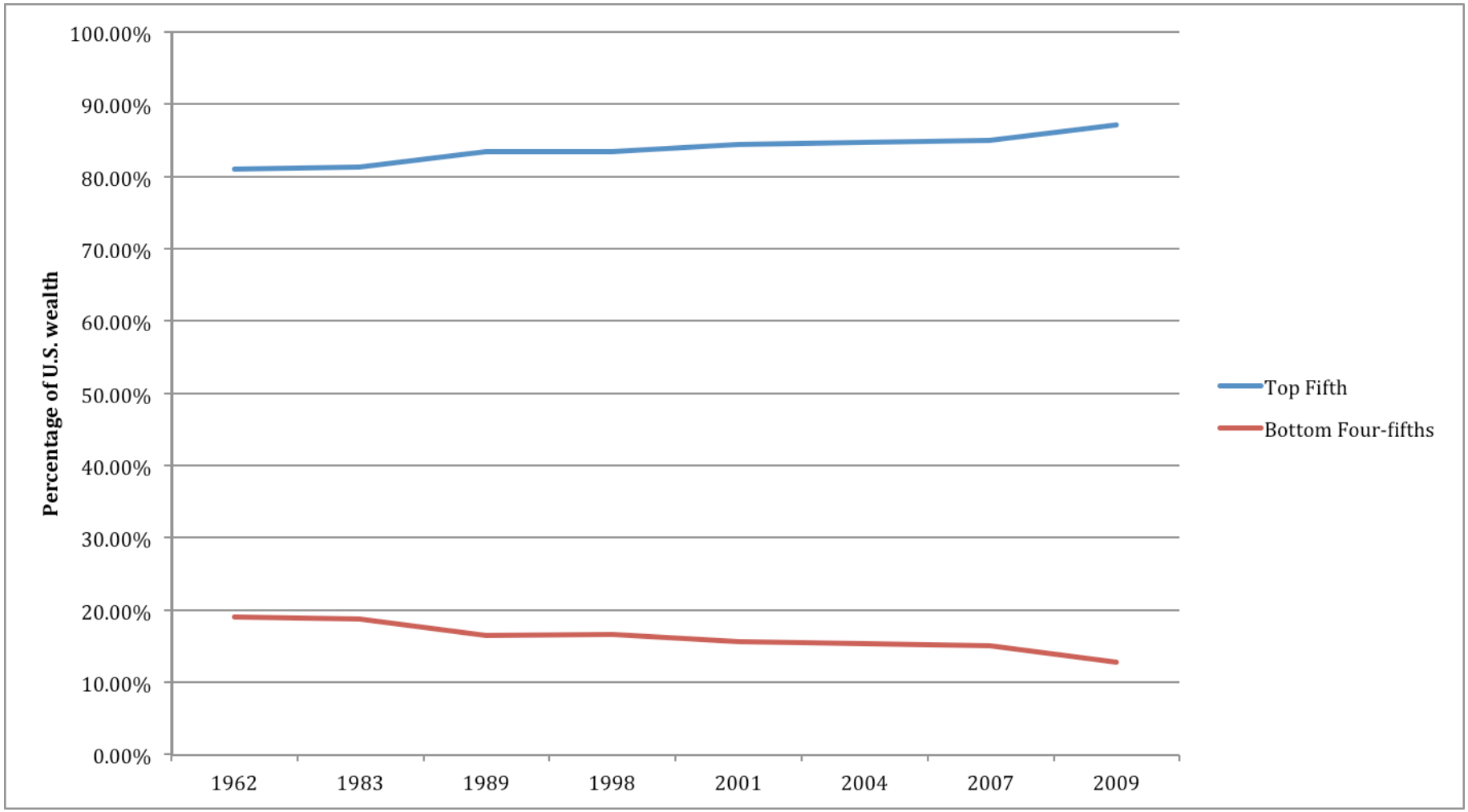

Figure 3. *Changes in the distribution of wealth, 1962 – 2009*

Source: Economic Policy Institute 2011 (http://epi.3cdn.net/2a7ccb3e9e618f0bbc_3nm6idnax.pdf)

The second research question (**Q2**) addresses how income inequality was defined. Table 4 presents the various definitions offered for income inequality. The most commonly referenced definition of income inequality was that there was a gap between the rich and poor (170 mentions), though a significant portion of articles referenced the fact that the gap was widening (148 mentions), suggesting that the fact that income inequality is growing is part of the way the issue is framed (**Q2a)**. However, declining mobility (14 mentions) and the disappearing middle class (7 mentions) were not significant elements of how inequality was framed (**Q2b)**.

Table 4. *Definition of Problem*

Definition	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	N
Gap between rich and poor	54	45	39	12	20	170
Gap is widening	46	40	39	7	16	148
Declining mobility	6	4	0	0	4	14
Middle class disappearing	3	3	1	0	0	7
Other	3	3	2	0	0	8
Not defined	18	18	10	4	12	62

Next, I examined how causal responsibility was framed in the articles (**Q3)**. Table 5 lists the various casual interpretations frames mentioned in the sample. I found that neoliberal frames were most frequently used when discussing the cause of growing inequality (230 mentions), while liberal frames were used nearly as often (210 mentions). Fate was rarely as a causal frame (10 mentions), while many of the frames (127 mentions) were not directly interpreted as either liberal or neoliberal. These ambiguous frames most frequently referred to immigration and education as sources of income

inequality. Appendix B includes a full list of how each frame was coded as either neoliberal, liberal, neither/both, or fate. Appendix D lists all causal interpretations by year. Figure 4 illustrates the percentage of neoliberal, liberal, and other causal interpretation frames mentioned within the articles.

Table 5. *Causal Interpretation Frames*

Cause	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	N
Neoliberal	109	73	29	4	15	230
Liberal	66	70	32	14	28	210
Neither/Both	57	35	14	8	13	127
Fate	5	3	1	0	1	10
Cause is Complex	1	1	0	1	0	3
None Suggested	14	17	20	7	15	73

Note: The number of times causes for income inequality were mentioned at least once per article in *The New York Times* between 2006 and 2010.

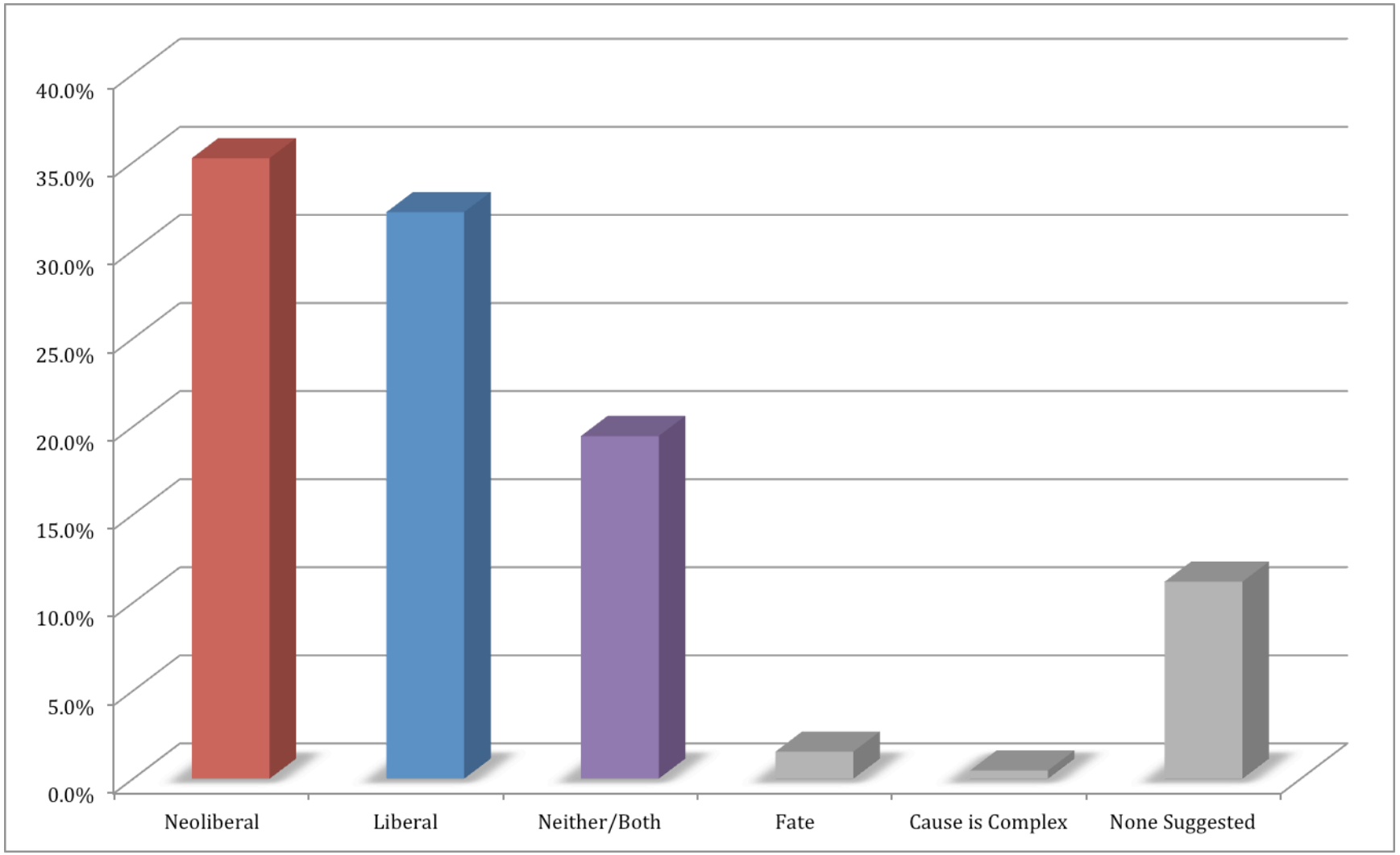

Figure 4. *Causal Interpretation Frames of Income Inequality in The New York Times, 2006 - 2010*

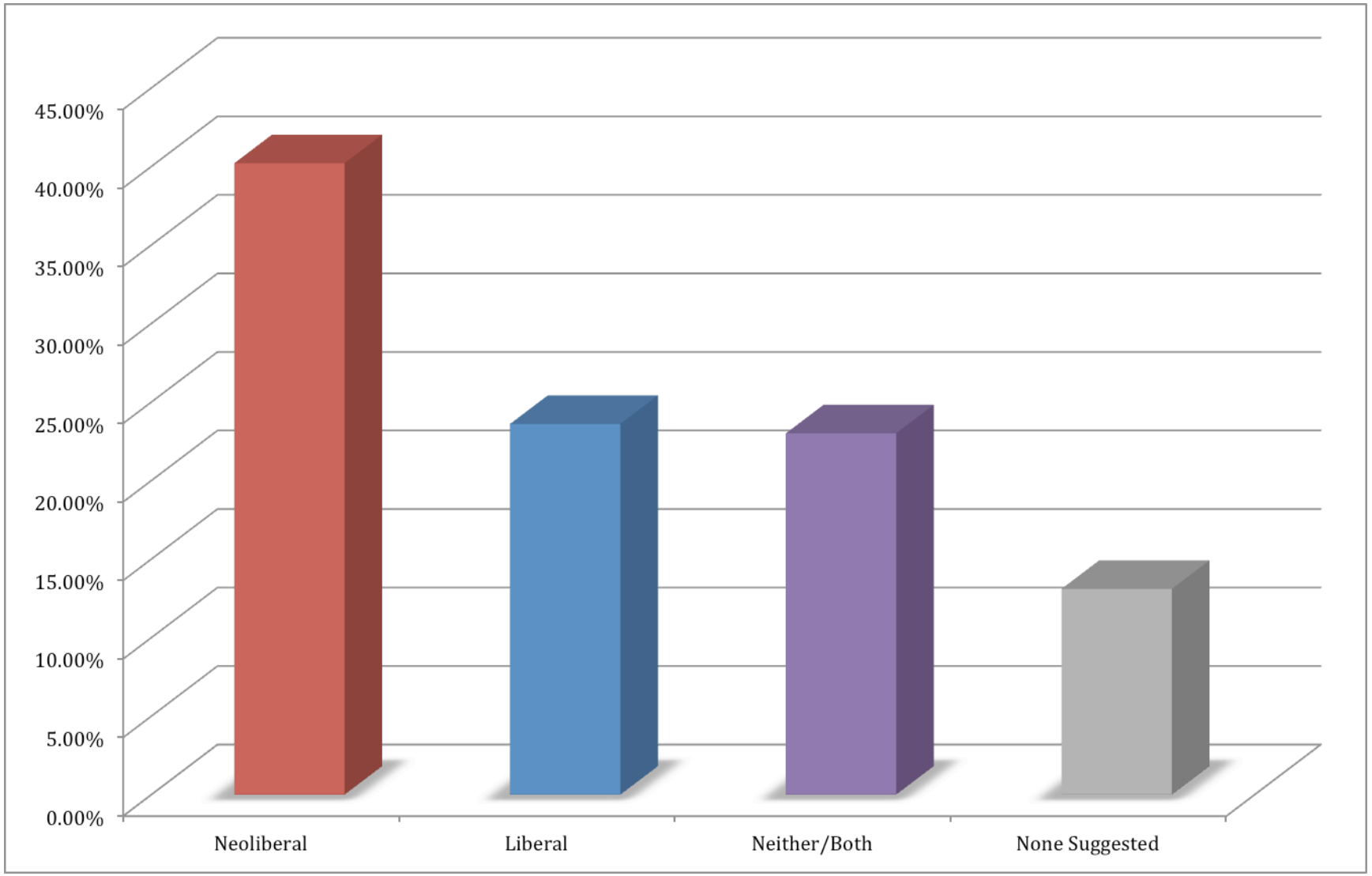

Figure 5. *Treatment Recommendation Frames for Income Inequality in The New York Times, 2006 - 2010*

Table 6 lists the various treatment recommendation frames mentioned in the sample. In answer to my research question regarding how solutions for income inequality were framed (**Q4)**, I found that neoliberal frames were most frequently used when discussing the solutions to income inequality (206 mentions), while liberal frames were used much less often (121 mentions). Many of the frames (118 mentions) were not directly interpreted as either liberal or neoliberal, the majority of which were ambiguous references to the benefits of education as a way to reduce income inequality or vague implications that the government should do *something*. Appendix B includes a full list of how each frame was coded as either neoliberal, liberal, neither/both, or fate. Appendix E lists all treatment recommendations by year. Figure 5 illustrates the percentage of neoliberal, liberal, and other treatment recommendation frames mentioned within the articles.

Table 6. *Treatment Recommendation Frames*

Solution	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	N
Neoliberal	48	77	48	8	25	206
Liberal	32	28	33	8	20	121
Neither/Both	24	48	23	6	17	118
None Suggested	26	13	14	3	11	67

Note: The number of times different treatment recommendations for income inequality were mentioned at least once per article between 2006 and 2010.

To determine if there is evidence for a liberal or neoliberal hegemony in how income inequality is framed **(Q5)**, I compared the number of liberal and neoliberal causes and solutions referenced from 2006 to 2010. Overall, there appears to be evidence for a neoliberal hegemony in how income inequality is framed as measured by the ratio of liberal (331) to neoliberal (436) causes and solutions mentioned over the course of the

five-year period. Fourteen percent more neoliberal than liberal frames are mentioned when addressing income inequality. Table 7 displays the total number of neoliberal and liberal causes and solutions mentioned at least once in each article to answer the question of hegemonic media framing of income inequality. Figure 6 illustrates the percentage distribution of neoliberal and liberal frames over the five-year period.

Table 7. *Total Neoliberal and Liberal Frames*

Year	Neoliberal Frames	Liberal Frames	N
2006	157	98	255
2007	150	98	248
2008	77	65	142
2009	12	22	34
2010	40	48	88
N	436	331	767

Note: Total number of causal interpretations and treatment recommendations, found at least once per article, for neoliberal and liberal frames in *The New York Times* from 2006 to 2010.

Table 8 addresses what bias, if any, appears in the articles by analyzing what slant appears in each article (**Q6**). Table 8 shows that while the majority of articles did not contain a slant toward a particular cause, solution, or moral assumption, considerably more articles had a liberal slant than a conservative slant for cause, solution, and moral assumptions. Appendix F contains an example of an article coded for neoliberal cause, solution, and moral assumptions. Appendix G contains an example of an article coded for liberal liberal cause, solution, and moral assumptions. Appendix H contains an example of an article coded as having an unclear or neutral slant toward cause, solution, and moral assumptions regarding income inequality. Figure 7 illustrates the percentage of articles containing either a neoliberal, liberal, or neutral slant.

Table 8. *Articles Coded for Neoliberal, Liberal, or Neutral Slant*

		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	N
Cause	Neoliberal	5	9	2	2	0	18
	Liberal	18	16	10	6	7	57
	None/Not Clear	49	39	39	8	25	160
Solution	Neoliberal	5	7	2	1	1	16
	Liberal	19	19	15	7	11	71
	None/Not Clear	48	38	34	8	20	148
Moral Assumption	Neoliberal	3	7	5	1	2	18
	Liberal	19	19	13	6	10	67
	None/Not Clear	50	38	33	9	20	150

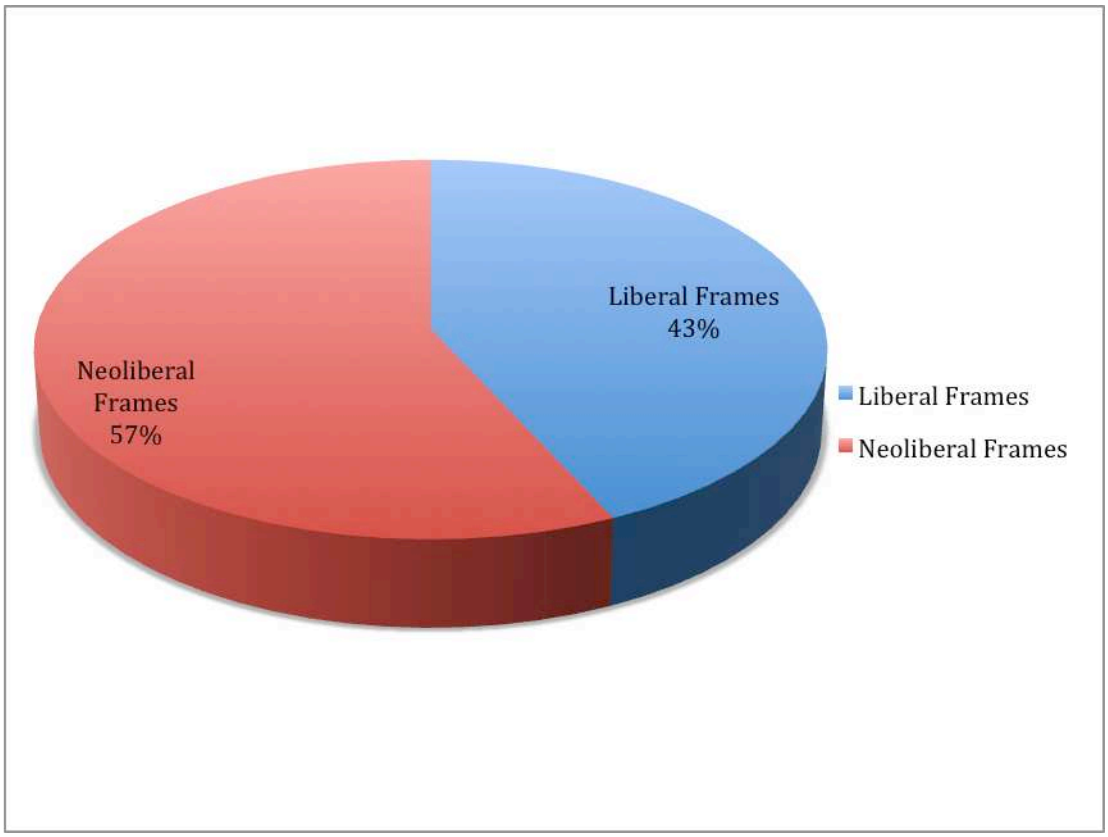

Figure 6. *Percentage of Neoliberal and Liberal Frames in* The New York Times*, 2006 - 2010*

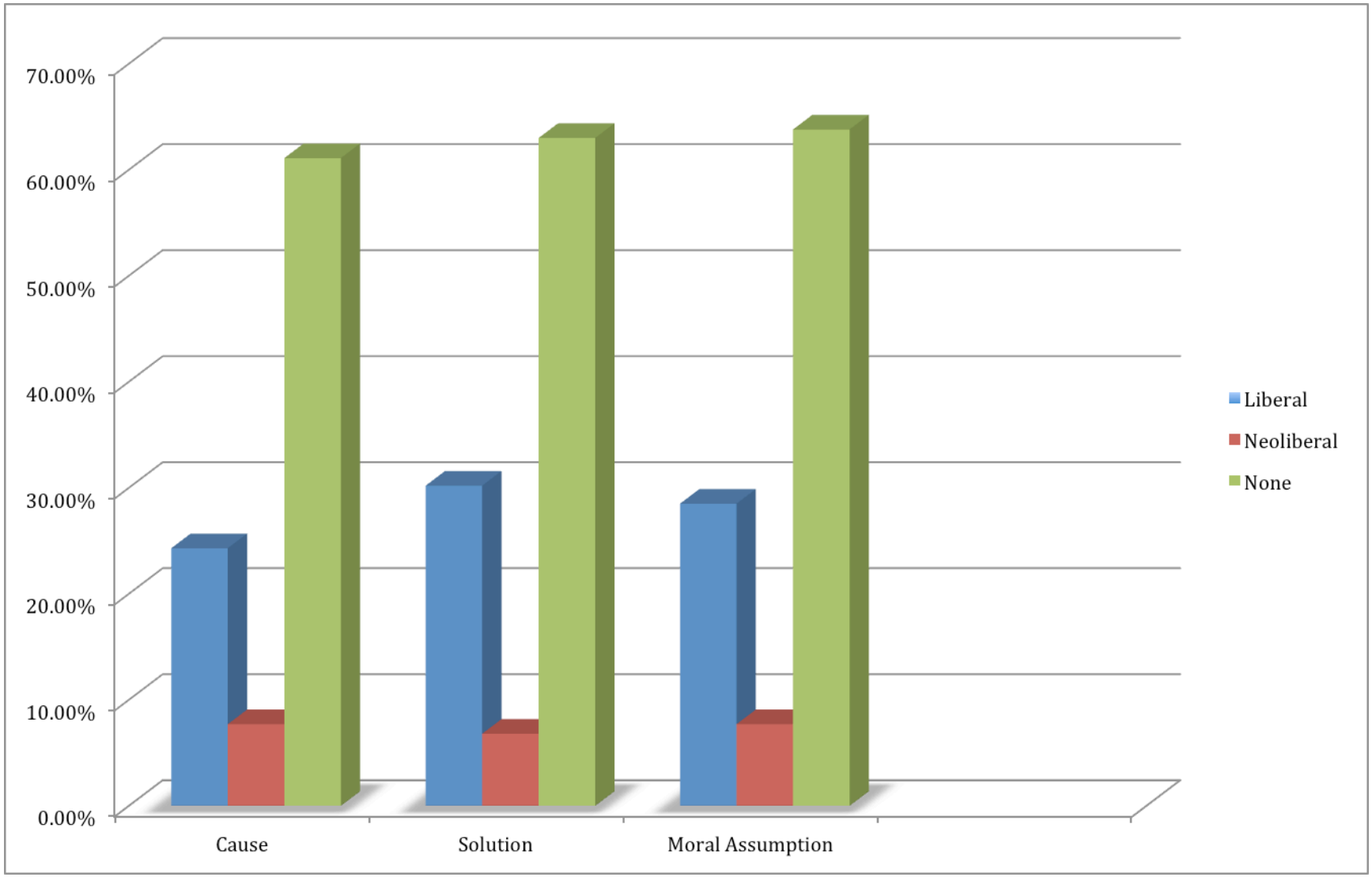

Figure 7. *Percentage of Articles with a Neoliberal, Liberal, or Neutral Slant in The New York Times, 2006 - 2010*

CHAPTER 6
DISCUSSION

Discounting Mirror Theory

My first research question asked if the coverage of income inequality between 2006 and 2010 accurately reflected the real life increase in income inequality over that same time period. This question is important because most individuals rely on media representations of issues, particularly economic issues, to make sense of complex information that may not otherwise be readily available to them (Erbring, et al., 1980; Fogarty, 2005). In addition, the amount of news exposure a particular issue receives has a strong impact on what individuals believe are the most important social and political issues (Brosius & Kepplinger, 1990; Erbring, et al., 1980; McCombs & Shaw, 1972; McLeod, et al., 1974; Shaw & McCombs, 1997).

However, similar to findings related to the coverage of the obesity epidemic, avian flu risks, child-care availability, and political protests, this study found that there was little support for the mirror theory (the supposition that coverage in the media accurately reflects reality) as it relates to growing income inequality (Abeysinghe & White, 2010; Albanese, et al., 2010; Myers & Caniglia, 2004; Saguy & Almeling, 2008; Shoemaker & Mayfield, 1984). While income inequality continued to grow over the five-year period analyzed by the study, coverage actually declined in all but one year. This fact seems particularly remarkable given that previous studies have found the media disproportionately reports negative economic news – and a rise in income inequality is certainly bad news (Fogarty, 2005).

Missing Frames, Social Mobility, and Cultural Hegemony

Because the media cannot be relied upon to provide audiences with an exact picture of reality, it is necessary to think critically about what, exactly, the media does provide audiences. Cultural hegemony, or the penetration of elite ideology into the common sense and everyday practices of subordinate classes, creates "spontaneous" consent to the structural inequalities within society (Gramsci, 1971). This theory suggests that the media will portray economic and social issues in ways that ideologically justify the current economic system.

Media scholars that posit media coverage is influenced by elite journalist bias, corporate interests, dependence on advertising revenue, and/or newsgathering routines that privilege powerful government, political, and business sources, all note that the media serves to promote the interests of economic and political elites under the guise of objectivity, while deliberately conflating the interests of the elites with those of workers and others outside the elite class (Bagdikian, 1990; Bell & Entman, 2011; Gans, 1979; Gitlin, 1980; Kollmeyer, 2004). In this way, the news acts as propaganda that manufactures consent for the current economic system (Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Parenti, 1993). One of the most powerful ways this occurs is through the media's "intense regulatory power" to "restrict serious, 'responsible' consideration to a limited range of topics and approaches" (Peet, 2002, p. 57).

It is vital, therefore, to look, not just for the range of topics and approaches included in how an issue is framed, but to look for what is *left out* of the frame as well. This study found that while definitions of income inequality included a growing gap

between the wealthy and poor, virtually no mention is made of the fact that social mobility in America is virtually at a standstill, that the middle class is shrinking, or that America has one of the lowest rates of social mobility of all developed nations, second only to the United Kingdom (Garfinkel, et al., 2010; Hertz, 2006; Solon, 2002). This gap in coverage is particularly meaningful when considering that the single best predictor of Americans' attitudes toward income inequality is their perceptions of the potential for mobility (McCall, 2005). Those who feel that America does not offer a good chance to improve their economic situations are far more likely to object to income inequality than those who buy into the Horatio Alger myth. It is difficult not to draw the conclusion that the media is systematically reinforcing elite ideology – income inequality is acceptable because if an individual works hard enough, he or she will make it to the top of the inverted pyramid (Hochschild, 1995) – by leaving out the single most potentially subversive bit of information: most Americans will never personally benefit from the current economic system.

Bias, Framing, and Cultural Hegemony

Contrary to media theories that suggest elite, fiscally conservative journalists or avaricious media corporations will bias how financial issues are portrayed in the media, this study found that more than half the time there was no discernable bias in how the causes, solutions, and underlying moral assumptions were framed when addressing income inequality (Bagdikian, 1990; Croteau, 1998; Croteau & Hoynes, 2001; Kollmeyer, 2004). This finding is in line with other studies that suggest mainstream media (such as *The New York Times)* tends to be more balanced than left or right leaning outlets (Covert & Wasburn, 2007; Kim, et al., 2010). While scholars who believe liberal journalists' bias

tends to leak onto the page might point out that liberal slant is represented more than twice as often as neoliberal slant, neutral articles far outweigh them both; if we are looking for patterns of slant to determine bias, the most we can say is that there is a slight liberal bias in framing income inequality in *The New York Times* (Entman, 2007; Goldberg, 2002).

When looking at framing and agenda setting effects, it is crucial to remember that the media tells us what to think, not through direct persuasion, but by telling us what to *think about* (Anastasio, et al., 1999; Entman, 1989). While patterns of slant that result in bias can be interpreted as a fairly direct attempt to shape an audience's opinions, framing and agenda setting can be much more subtle. Framing and agenda setting make certain definitions, casual interpretations, treatment recommendations, and moral assumptions salient in our minds, while narrowing our focus to exclude ideas outside of the frames (Entman, 1993; McCombs & Ghanem, 2001). The power inherent in framing and agenda setting make them ideal tools for promoting cultural hegemony, since cultural hegemony relies on subtle but ubiquitous modes of persuasion rather than direct persuasion or coercion (Entman, 1989; Gramsci, 1971).

Therefore, it is interesting to note that while there was a slight liberal bias in how income inequality was framed in *The New York Times,* there was a notable difference in how frequently neoliberal frames and liberal frames were included in the discourse. Both causal interpretations and treatment recommendations had more neoliberal than liberal frames mentioned, while treatment recommendations had almost twice the number of neoliberal than liberal mentions. Overall, neoliberal frames were utilized 14% more than liberal frames. One of the questions guiding this study asks: Is there evidence for a liberal

or neoliberal hegemony in how income inequality is framed? If framing renders specific information more salient to audiences while excluding alternative ideas and interpretations, then the predominance of neoliberal frames regarding income inequality – in particular treatment recommendations for income inequality - suggests that there is a neoliberal hegemonic discourse in *The New York Times* from 2006 to 2010.

Limitations and Further Research

It is important to note that this study only analyzes how *The New York Times* frames inequality; other news media should be examined before generalizing these findings to all American media. In preparing the codebook for this study, articles from *The Washington Post* were used to test the coding scheme. While *The New York Times* initially appears to have a small liberal bias, the *Post* had a decidedly neoliberal bent; the issue of slant and bias should be analyzed further using a wide variety of media sources.

In coding and categorizing the data, I had particular difficulty in teasing out the nuances of education as a causal interpretation and treatment recommendation for income inequality. While on one hand, education can be seen as a neoliberal cause (individuals don't stay in school or work hard enough to get a higher degree), it can also be seen as a liberal cause for inequality (structural failures such as unequal access to quality education). As a solution, education can be either neoliberal (individuals should work hard to attain the education they need to succeed) or liberal (improving educational opportunities and quality for everyone). However, quite frequently education was used as a blanket explanation and cure-all for income inequality. Further research should focus on the way education is framed, or perhaps glossed over, in addressing income inequality.

Finally, further research should also be done to connect the ideas of framing, agenda setting, slant, bias, and cultural hegemony. What is more predictive of a media source's influence over its audience – bias that attempts to sway an audience or the frequency with which specific frames are brought to an audience's attention?

Conclusion

The negative effects of income inequality are well documented. Nations with higher levels of inequality have higher infant mortality rates, shorter life expectancies, and greater negative health outcomes for all income groups (Garfinkel, et al., 2010; van der Hoeven, 2010). High levels of inequality also lead to government corruption and exploitation of workers (Sakamoto & Kim, 2010; You & Khagram, 2005). And when income inequality is extreme, social mobility is reduced, limiting the opportunities and fundamental freedoms so many rely on to achieve the "American Dream" (Hertz, 2006).

Given these consequences, it is in the best interests of a nation to reduce inequality. Evidence suggests that a large public sector and the resulting welfare state generosity is associated with reduced income inequality (Gustafsson & Johansson, 1999; Moller, Huber, Stephens, Bradley, & Nielson, 2003). Lee, Nelson, and Alderson (2007) find that when governments have smaller welfare states, globalization leads to higher inequality, but that when there is a large public sector the effects on inequality are either attenuated or negative. Research also shows that left government has a negative effect on wage inequality due to the emphasis on minimum wages and active market policies (Moller, et al., 2003; Pontusson, Rueda, & Way, 2002; Rueda & Pontusson, 2000). In addition, low inequality is found when a large proportion of the labor force belongs to a trade union and when bargaining is centralized (Alderson & Nielson, 2002; Gustafsson &

Johansson, 1999; Moller, et al., 2003; Wallerstein, 1990). Finally, there is little empirical evidence that generous social policy discourages work effort and reduces labor supply (Atkinson & Mogensen, 1993).

However, the new neoliberal cultural hegemony scorns such liberal initiatives as fiscally irresponsible and morally distasteful. According to Harvey (2005), neoliberalism is a "political program" designed to advance the interests of the wealthy elite, while exploiting the middle and working classes. Thus, when the news media shows evidence of framing income inequality in neoliberal terms that reinforce neoliberal cultural hegemony, there is reason to be concerned. While neoliberalism and liberalism can be seen as competing cultural hegemonic discourses, it can only be concluded that more effort must be put into including liberal frames in the media if real and lasting solutions to income inequality are to become part of the "every day common sense" beliefs of the American people.

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APPENDIX A

CODE BOOK

Article #
Date

Play
Day of week, Section, Desk, Page, Number of Words

Focus

1. Primary- article is about inequality
2. Secondary- inequality is a parallel issue, a cause, or effect of the main focus
3. Tertiary – mentioned in passing, not fully addressed
8. Letter to the editor, review of book, article, etc. STOP HERE
9. Other – not related to the issue at had (bio, history, etc.) STOP HERE

Problem Definition
How is the problem defined?

1. Gap between rich and poor
2. Gap is widening
3. Social mobility reduced/eliminated
4. Middle class disappearing
5. Other
6. Not defined

Causal Interpretation
Who/what is causing the problem?

1. Individual Causes
    20. Lazy/lack motivation/lack talent/lack discipline
    21. Lack education
    22. Broken family
    23. Disability
    24. Make bad decisions (take on too much debt, don't save, don't plan)
    25. Drug abuse/criminal activity
    26. Abuse/depend on social programs
    27. Highly motivated/work hard
    28. Exceptional talent
    29. Make good decisions
    30. Comes from a good family
    31. Quality educational attainment
    00. Other

2. Societal Causes
    32. Culture of poverty
    33. Discrimination/racism

34. Changing demographics of region/nation
35. Immigration
36. Changing societal norms (inequality more acceptable)
00. Other

3. Political Causes
    36. Taxes burden wealthy/business or unfairly benefit middle class/poor
    37. Taxes burden middle class/poor or unfairly benefit wealthy/business
    38. Welfare/social programs create dependency
    39. Welfare/social programs are insufficient
    40. Education policies
    41. Political favors or advantages
    42. Economic/business regulation - too much
    43. Economic/business regulation - not enough
    44. Health care policy inadequate
    45. Right wing/elite conspiracy
    46. Left wing conspiracy/class warfare
    00. Other

4. Economic/Business Causes
    45. Globalization
    46. Maximizing profits
    47. General greed (excessive compensation, etc.)
    48. Reckless behavior of business (poor investments, wonton risk taking)
    49. Abusive behavior of business (lending practices, fraud)
    50. Rise in unemployment
    51. Slow job growth
    52. Technology eliminating jobs
    53. Unions demand too much
    54. Unions declining in power
    55. Stagnating wages
    56. Inflation
    00. Other

5. Fatalistic Causes
    57. Luck
    58. God's will
    00. Other

6. Cause is complex (without further discussion)/ too complex to explain

7. No cause suggested

Treatment Recommendation

How should the problem be solved?

1. Problem should be solved by individual
    20. Education attainment
    21. Work harder
    22. Get/stay married/family planning
    23. Make better decisions
    24. Individual philanthropy
    00. Other

2. Problem should be solved by society
    25. Community action
    26. Charity action
    00. Other

3. Problem should be solved by government
    27. Tax cuts for the wealthy/business (or maintain cuts)
    28. Tax cuts for middle class/poor, progressive tax structure, increase for wealthy
    29. Create more jobs
    30. Reform government aid programs (more aid)
    31. Reform government aid programs (less aid/require more work)
    32. Privatize social security/reduce benefits/raise retirement age
    33. Protect/expand social security
    34. Raise minimum wage
    35. Boost economy (general)
    36. Improve school quality
    37. Improve access to higher education
    38. Control outsourcing, globalization, etc
    39. Protect union/worker rights
    40. Regulate business practices (misleading borrowers, risky investment, executive compensation, etc.)
    41. Health care reform
    00. Other

4. Problem should be solved by businesses
    42. Limit outsourcing, globalization, etc
    43. Respect union/worker rights
    44. Regulate practices (stop misleading borrowers, risky investment, etc.)
    00. Other

5. Problem can not be solved/ is inevitable

45. Result of capitalism
46. Result of human nature/condition
00. Other

6. Problem should not be solved/is not a problem
47. Does not really exist
48. Is a good thing
00. Other
7. Solution not offered

Slant

A. Does the article contain a slant toward a specific cause of inequality?
1. Conservative
2. Liberal
3. No slant/unclear

B. Does the article contain a slant toward a specific solution?
1. Conservative
2. Liberal
3. No slant/unclear

C. Does the article contain a slant toward a specific moral assumption?
1. Conservative
2. Liberal
3. No slant/unclear

Definitions:

Slant: Privileging one frame over another, either overtly or subtly by emphasizing the validity of one cause, moral assumption, or solution over another.

Liberal causes: Structural, unequal opportunity, poor education opportunity, inheritance advantages, government deregulation of business, tax cuts for wealthy, declining power of unions, poor wages

Liberal solutions: restructure tax code, limit inheritance through taxes, increase minimum wages, increase business regulation, empower unions, improve education opportunities

Liberal moral assumptions: government should play a hand in eliminating inequality, capitalism should be moderated/regulated, not everyone has the same opportunities, extreme inequality is immoral, privileging equality

Neoliberal causes: Individual attainment, individual failure, market efficiency, too much government intervention

Neoliberal solutions: Government should stay out of business, trickle down economics, deregulate business, cut taxes for all, eliminate union control, improve education attainment

Neoliberal assumptions: pursuit of happiness paramount, keeping what one earns is fair, welfare corrupts, unregulated markets are ideal, everyone in America has the same opportunities, privileging capitalism

APPENDIX B

NEOLIBERAL, LIBERAL, AND NEUTRAL FRAMES

Neoliberal Frames

Causal Interpretation

- Individual Causes
  - Lazy/lack motivation/lack talent/lack discipline
  - Broken family
  - Make bad decisions (take on too much debt, don't save, don't plan)
  - Drug abuse/criminal activity
  - Abuse/depend on social programs
  - Highly motivated/work hard
  - Exceptional talent
  - Make good decisions
  - Comes from a good family
  - Other
- Societal Causes
  - Culture of poverty
  - Other
- Political Causes
  - Taxes burden wealthy/business or unfairly benefit middle class/poor
  - Welfare/social programs create dependency
  - Economic/business regulation - too much
  - Left wing conspiracy/class warfare
- Economic/Business Causes
  - Globalization
  - Technology eliminating jobs
  - Unions demand too much
  - Stagnating wages
  - Inflation

Treatment Recommendation

- Problem should be solved by society
  - Charity action
  - Other
- Problem should be solved by government
  - Tax cuts for the wealthy/business (or maintain cuts)
  - Reform government aid programs (less aid/require more work)
  - Privatize social security/reduce benefits/raise retirement age

Problem should be solved by businesses
- Limit outsourcing, globalization, etc
- Respect union/worker rights
- Regulate practices (stop misleading borrowers, risky investment, etc.)
- Other

Problem cannot be solved/ is inevitable
- Result of capitalism
- Result of human nature/condition
- Other

Problem should not be solved/is not a problem
- Does not really exist
- Is a good thing
- Other

Liberal Frames

Causal Interpretation

Societal Causes
- Discrimination/racism
- Changing demographics of region/nation
- Changing societal norms (inequality more acceptable)
- Other

Political Causes
- Taxes burden middle class/poor or unfairly benefit wealthy/business
- Welfare/social programs are insufficient
- Economic/business regulation - not enough
- Health care policy inadequate
- Right wing/elite conspiracy

Economic/Business Causes
- Maximizing profits
- General greed (excessive compensation, etc.)
- Reckless behavior of business (poor investments, wonton risk taking)
- Abusive behavior of business (lending practices, fraud)
- Unions declining in power

Treatment Recommendation

Problem should be solved by government

Tax cuts for middle class/poor, progressive tax structure, increase for wealthy
Create more jobs
Reform government aid programs (more aid)
Protect/expand social security
Raise minimum wage
Control outsourcing, globalization, etc
Protect union/worker rights
Regulate business practices (misleading borrowers, risky investment, executive compensation, etc.)
Health care reform

Both/Neither Frames

Causal Interpretation

Individual Causes

Lack education
Quality educational attainment

Societal Causes

Immigration
Other

Political Causes

Education policies
Political favors or advantages
Other

Economic/Business Causes

Rise in unemployment
Slow job growth
Other

Treatment Recommendation

Problem should be solved by society

Community action
Other

Problem should be solved by government

Boost economy (general)
Improve school quality
Improve access to higher education
Other

APPENDIX C

INTER-RATER RELIABILITY

Table 9. *Inter-rater Reliability for Definitions of Income Inequality*

	Percent Agreement	N Agreements	N Disagreements	N Cases	N Decisions
Variable 1 (cols 1 & 2)	100	30	0	30	60
Variable 2 (cols 3 & 4)	80	24	6	30	60
Variable 3 (cols 5 & 6)	93.33333333	28	2	30	60
Variable 4 (cols 7 & 8)	100	30	0	30	60
Variable 5 (cols 9 & 10)	80	24	6	30	60
Variable 6 (cols 11 & 12)	100	30	0	30	60

Table 10. *Inter-rater Reliability for Causal Interpretations of Income Inequality*

	Percent Agreement	N Agreements	N Disagreements	N Cases	N Decisions
Variable 1 (cols 1 & 2)	96.66666667	29	1	30	60
Variable 2 (cols 3 & 4)	93.33333333	28	2	30	60
Variable 3 (cols 5 & 6)	100	30	0	30	60
Variable 4 (cols 7 & 8)	100	30	0	30	60
Variable 5 (cols 9 & 10)	100	30	0	30	60
Variable 6 (cols 11 & 12)	100	30	0	30	60
Variable 7 (cols 13 & 14)	100	30	0	30	60
Variable 8 (cols 15 & 16)	100	30	0	30	60
Variable 9 (cols 17 & 18)	96.66666667	29	1	30	60
Variable 10 (cols 19 & 20)	100	30	0	30	60
Variable 11 (cols 21 & 22)	100	30	0	30	60
Variable 12	93.33333333	28	2	30	60

(cols 23 & 24)					
Variable 13 (cols 25 & 26)	100	30	0	30	60
Variable 14 (cols 27 & 28)	100	30	0	30	60
Variable 15 (cols 29 & 30)	96.66666667	29	1	30	60
Variable 16 (cols 31 & 32)	100	30	0	30	60
Variable 17 (cols 33 & 34)	96.66666667	29	1	30	60
Variable 18 (cols 35 & 36)	100	30	0	30	60
Variable 19 (cols 37 & 38)	100	30	0	30	60
Variable 20 (cols 39 & 40)	100	30	0	30	60
Variable 21 (cols 41 & 42)	93.33333333	28	2	30	60
Variable 22 (cols 43 & 44)	100	30	0	30	60
Variable 23 (cols 45 & 46)	93.33333333	28	2	30	60
Variable 24 (cols 47 & 48)	100	30	0	30	60
Variable 25 (cols 49 & 50)	96.66666667	29	1	30	60
Variable 26 (cols 51 & 52)	96.66666667	29	1	30	60
Variable 27 (cols 53 & 54)	86.66666667	26	4	30	60
Variable 28 (cols 55 & 56)	96.66666667	29	1	30	60
Variable 29 (cols 57 & 58)	100	30	0	30	60
Variable 30 (cols 59 & 60)	96.66666667	29	1	30	60
Variable 31 (cols 61 & 62)	96.66666667	29	1	30	60
Variable 32 (cols 63 & 64)	93.33333333	28	2	30	60
Variable 33 (cols 65 & 66)	100	30	0	30	60
Variable 34 (cols 67 & 68)	96.66666667	29	1	30	60

Variable 35 (cols 69 & 70)	100	30	0	30	60
Variable 36 (cols 71 & 72)	100	30	0	30	60
Variable 37 (cols 73 & 74)	100	30	0	30	60
Variable 38 (cols 75 & 76)	96.66666667	29	1	30	60
Variable 39 (cols 77 & 78)	93.33333333	28	2	30	60
Variable 40 (cols 79 & 80)	100	30	0	30	60
Variable 41 (cols 81 & 82)	96.66666667	29	1	30	60
Variable 42 (cols 83 & 84)	93.33333333	28	2	30	60
Variable 43 (cols 85 & 86)	96.66666667	29	1	30	60
Variable 44 (cols 87 & 88)	100	30	0	30	60
Variable 45 (cols 89 & 90)	100	30	0	30	60
Variable 46 (cols 91 & 92)	100	30	0	30	60
Variable 47 (cols 93 & 94)	100	30	0	30	60
Variable 48 (cols 95 & 96)	100	30	0	30	60
Variable 49 (cols 97 & 98)	86.66666667	26	4	30	60

Table 11. *Inter-rater Reliability for Treatment Recommendations for Income Inequality*

	Percent Agreement	*N Agreements*	*N Disagreements*	*N Cases*	*N Decisions*
Variable 1 (cols 1 & 2)	*100*	*30*	*0*	*30*	*60*
Variable 2 (cols 3 & 4)	*100*	*30*	*0*	*30*	*60*
Variable 3 (cols 5 & 6)	*100*	*30*	*0*	*30*	*60*
Variable 4 (cols 7 & 8)	*100*	*30*	*0*	*30*	*60*
Variable 5 (cols 9 & 10)	*100*	*30*	*0*	*30*	*60*
Variable 6 (cols	*100*	*30*	*0*	*30*	*60*

11 & 12)					
Variable 7 (cols 13 & 14)	*100*	*30*	*0*	*30*	*60*
Variable 8 (cols 15 & 16)	*100*	*30*	*0*	*30*	*60*
Variable 9 (cols 17 & 18)	*100*	*30*	*0*	*30*	*60*
Variable 10 (cols 19 & 20)	*100*	*30*	*0*	*30*	*60*
Variable 11 (cols 21 & 22)	*86.66666667*	*26*	*4*	*30*	*60*
Variable 12 (cols 23 & 24)	*100*	*30*	*0*	*30*	*60*
Variable 13 (cols 25 & 26)	*93.33333333*	*28*	*2*	*30*	*60*
Variable 14 (cols 27 & 28)	*96.66666667*	*29*	*1*	*30*	*60*
Variable 15 (cols 29 & 30)	*96.66666667*	*29*	*1*	*30*	*60*
Variable 16 (cols 31 & 32)	*96.66666667*	*29*	*1*	*30*	*60*
Variable 17 (cols 33 & 34)	*100*	*30*	*0*	*30*	*60*
Variable 18 (cols 35 & 36)	*100*	*30*	*0*	*30*	*60*
Variable 19 (cols 37 & 38)	*100*	*30*	*0*	*30*	*60*
Variable 20 (cols 39 & 40)	*100*	*30*	*0*	*30*	*60*
Variable 21 (cols 41 & 42)	*100*	*30*	*0*	*30*	*60*
Variable 22 (cols 43 & 44)	*96.66666667*	*29*	*1*	*30*	*60*
Variable 23 (cols 45 & 46)	*100*	*30*	*0*	*30*	*60*
Variable 24 (cols 47 & 48)	*90*	*27*	*3*	*30*	*60*
Variable 25 (cols 49 & 50)	*90*	*27*	*3*	*30*	*60*
Variable 26 (cols 51 & 52)	*100*	*30*	*0*	*30*	*60*
Variable 27 (cols 53 & 54)	*96.66666667*	*29*	*1*	*30*	*60*
Variable 28 (cols 55 & 56)	*96.66666667*	*29*	*1*	*30*	*60*

Variable 29 (cols 57 & 58)	*100*	*30*	*0*	*30*	*60*
Variable 30 (cols 59 & 60)	*100*	*30*	*0*	*30*	*60*
Variable 31 (cols 61 & 62)	*100*	*30*	*0*	*30*	*60*
Variable 32 (cols 63 & 64)	*100*	*30*	*0*	*30*	*60*
Variable 33 (cols 65 & 66)	*96.66666667*	*29*	*1*	*30*	*60*
Variable 34 (cols 67 & 68)	*100*	*30*	*0*	*30*	*60*
Variable 35 (cols 69 & 70)	*100*	*30*	*0*	*30*	*60*
Variable 36 (cols 71 & 72)	*93.33333333*	*28*	*2*	*30*	*60*

Table 12. *Inter-rater Reliability for Slant (Cause, Treatment, and Moral Assumptions)*

Variable 1 (cols 1 & 2)	*83.33333333*	*25*	*5*	*30*	*60*
Variable 2 (cols 3 & 4)	*86.66666667*	*26*	*4*	*30*	*60*
Variable 3 (cols 5 & 6)	*86.66666667*	*26*	*4*	*30*	*60*

APPENDIX D

CAUSAL INTERPRETATIONS FRAMES BY YEAR

	Year 2006				2007			
	Count	% within Year	% within $Causes	% of Total	Count	% within Year	% within $Causes	% of Total
Cause is complex	1	0.40%	33.30%	0.20%	1	0.50%	33.30%	0.20%
No cause suggested	14	5.60%	19.20%	2.10%	17	8.50%	23.30%	2.60%
Individual Other	6	2.40%	100.00%	0.90%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Lazy/lack motivation/lack talent/lack discipline	5	2.00%	71.40%	0.80%	2	1.00%	28.60%	0.30%
Lack education	13	5.20%	40.60%	2.00%	10	5.00%	31.20%	1.50%
Broken family	2	0.80%	20.00%	0.30%	4	2.00%	40.00%	0.60%
Disability	1	0.40%	100.00%	0.20%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Make bad decisions	2	0.80%	50.00%	0.30%	2	1.00%	50.00%	0.30%
Abuse/depend on social programs	1	0.40%	100.00%	0.20%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Highly motivated/work hard	3	1.20%	33.30%	0.50%	6	3.00%	66.70%	0.90%
Exceptional talent	2	0.80%	50.00%	0.30%	2	1.00%	50.00%	0.30%
Make good decisions	2	0.80%	40.00%	0.30%	3	1.50%	60.00%	0.50%
Comes from a	2	0.80%	33.30%	0.30%	2	1.00%	33.30%	0.30%

good family								
Quality educational attainment	15	6.00%	45.50%	2.30%	10	5.00%	30.30%	1.50%
Societal Other	1	0.40%	50.00%	0.20%	1	0.50%	50.00%	0.20%
Culture of poverty	2	0.80%	40.00%	0.30%	3	1.50%	60.00%	0.50%
Changing demographics region/nation	7	2.80%	50.00%	1.10%	3	1.50%	21.40%	0.50%
Immigration	10	4.00%	66.70%	1.50%	2	1.00%	13.30%	0.30%
Changing societal norms	1	0.40%	16.70%	0.20%	4	2.00%	66.70%	0.60%
Political Other	3	1.20%	27.30%	0.50%	2	1.00%	18.20%	0.30%
Taxes burden wealthy/business or unfairly benefit middle class/poor	4	1.60%	50.00%	0.60%	4	2.00%	50.00%	0.60%
Taxes burden middle class/poor or unfairly benefit wealthy/business	21	8.30%	32.80%	3.20%	21	10.60%	32.80%	3.20%
Welfare/social programs create dependency	1	0.40%	25.00%	0.20%	3	1.50%	75.00%	0.50%
Welfare/social programs are insufficient	3	1.20%	20.00%	0.50%	8	4.00%	53.30%	1.20%
Education policies	2	0.80%	22.20%	0.30%	4	2.00%	44.40%	0.60%
Political favors or advantages	6	2.40%	37.50%	0.90%	5	2.50%	31.20%	0.80%

Economic/business regulation - too much	1	0.40%	25.00%	0.20%	2	1.00%	50.00%	0.30%
Economic/business regulation - not enough	6	2.40%	24.00%	0.90%	8	4.00%	32.00%	1.20%
Health care policy inadequate	5	2.00%	45.50%	0.80%	4	2.00%	36.40%	0.60%
Right wing/elite conspiracy	3	1.20%	42.90%	0.50%	2	1.00%	28.60%	0.30%
Economic Other	8	3.20%	50.00%	1.20%	2	1.00%	12.50%	0.30%
Globalization	15	6.00%	35.70%	2.30%	12	6.00%	28.60%	1.80%
Maximizing profits	3	1.20%	50.00%	0.50%	2	1.00%	33.30%	0.30%
General greed (excessive compensation, etc.)	4	1.60%	16.70%	0.60%	9	4.50%	37.50%	1.40%
Reckless behavior of business	1	0.40%	16.70%	0.20%	1	0.50%	16.70%	0.20%
Abusive behavior of business	3	1.20%	37.50%	0.50%	1	0.50%	12.50%	0.20%
Rise in unemployment	4	1.60%	66.70%	0.60%	1	0.50%	16.70%	0.20%
Slow job growth	3	1.20%	100.00%	0.50%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Technology eliminating jobs	14	5.60%	41.20%	2.10%	10	5.00%	29.40%	1.50%
Unions demand too much	1	0.40%	100.00%	0.20%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Unions declining in power	9	3.60%	37.50%	1.40%	7	3.50%	29.20%	1.10%
Stagnating wages	25	9.90%	58.10%	3.80%	9	4.50%	20.90%	1.40%

Inflation	13	5.20%	61.90%	2.00%	7	3.50%	33.30%	1.10%
Luck	4	1.60%	44.40%	0.60%	3	1.50%	33.30%	0.50%
	252			38.60%	199			30.50%

	2008				2009			
	Count	% within Year	% within $Causes	% of Total	Count	% within Year	% within $Causes	% of Total
Cause is complex	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1	2.90%	33.30%	0.20%
No cause suggested	20	20.80%	27.40%	3.10%	7	20.60%	9.60%	1.10%
Individual Other	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Lazy/lack motivation/lack talent/lack discipline	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Lack education	4	4.20%	12.50%	0.60%	1	2.90%	3.10%	0.20%
Broken family	2	2.10%	20.00%	0.30%	1	2.90%	10.00%	0.20%
Disability	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Make bad decisions	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Abuse/depend on social programs	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Highly motivated/work hard	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Exceptional talent	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Make good decisions	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Comes from a good family	1	1.00%	16.70%	0.20%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Quality educational attainment	3	3.10%	9.10%	0.50%	1	2.90%	3.00%	0.20%
Societal Other	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Culture of poverty	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Changing demographics region/nation	3	3.10%	21.40%	0.50%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Immigration	2	2.10%	13.30%	0.30%	1	2.90%	6.70%	0.20%
Changing societal norms	1	1.00%	16.70%	0.20%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Political Other	3	3.10%	27.30%	0.50%	1	2.90%	9.10%	0.20%
Taxes burden wealthy/business or	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

unfairly benefit middle class/poor								
Taxes burden middle class/poor or unfairly benefit wealthy/business	12	12.50%	18.80%	1.80%	5	14.70%	7.80%	0.80%
Welfare/social programs create dependency	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Welfare/social programs are insufficient	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1	2.90%	6.70%	0.20%
Education policies	2	2.10%	22.20%	0.30%	1	2.90%	11.10%	0.20%
Political favors or advantages	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	3	8.80%	18.80%	0.50%
Economic/business regulation - too much	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Economic/business regulation - not enough	2	2.10%	8.00%	0.30%	3	8.80%	12.00%	0.50%
Health care policy inadequate	1	1.00%	9.10%	0.20%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Right wing/elite conspiracy	1	1.00%	14.30%	0.20%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Economic Other	3	3.10%	18.80%	0.50%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Globalization	10	10.40%	23.80%	1.50%	1	2.90%	2.40%	0.20%
Maximizing profits	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
General greed (excessive compensation, etc.)	3	3.10%	12.50%	0.50%	3	8.80%	12.50%	0.50%
Reckless behavior of business	2	2.10%	33.30%	0.30%	1	2.90%	16.70%	0.20%
Abusive behavior of business	2	2.10%	25.00%	0.30%	1	2.90%	12.50%	0.20%
Rise in unemployment	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Slow job growth	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Technology eliminating jobs	6	6.20%	17.60%	0.90%	1	2.90%	2.90%	0.20%
Unions demand too much	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Unions declining in power	5	5.20%	20.80%	0.80%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Stagnating wages	6	6.20%	14.00%	0.90%	1	2.90%	2.30%	0.20%
Inflation	1	1.00%	4.80%	0.20%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Luck		1	1.00%	11.10%	0.20%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
		96			14.70%	34			5.20%

	2010					
	Count	% within Year	% within $Causes	% of Total	Count	% of Total
Cause is complex	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	3	0.50%
No cause suggested	15	20.80%	20.50%	2.30%	73	11.20%
Individual Other	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	6	0.90%
Lazy/lack motivation/lack talent/lack discipline	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	7	1.10%
Lack education	4	5.60%	12.50%	0.60%	32	4.90%
Broken family	1	1.40%	10.00%	0.20%	10	1.50%
Disability	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1	0.20%
Make bad decisions	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	4	0.60%
Abuse/depend on social programs	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1	0.20%
Highly motivated/work hard	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	9	1.40%
Exceptional talent	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	4	0.60%
Make good decisions	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	5	0.80%
Comes from a good family	1	1.40%	16.70%	0.20%	6	0.90%
Quality educational attainment	4	5.60%	12.10%	0.60%	33	5.10%
Societal Other	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2	0.30%
Culture of poverty	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	5	0.80%
Changing demographics region/nation	1	1.40%	7.10%	0.20%	14	2.10%
Immigration	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	15	2.30%
Changing societal norms	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	6	0.90%

Political Other	2	2.80%	18.20%	0.30%	11	1.70%
Taxes burden wealthy/business or unfairly benefit middle class/poor	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	8	1.20%
Taxes burden middle class/poor or unfairly benefit wealthy/business	5	6.90%	7.80%	0.80%	64	9.80%
Welfare/social programs create dependency	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	4	0.60%
Welfare/social programs are insufficient	3	4.20%	20.00%	0.50%	15	2.30%
Education policies	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	9	1.40%
Political favors or advantages	2	2.80%	12.50%	0.30%	16	2.50%
Economic/business regulation - too much	1	1.40%	25.00%	0.20%	4	0.60%
Economic/business regulation - not enough	6	8.30%	24.00%	0.90%	25	3.80%
Health care policy inadequate	1	1.40%	9.10%	0.20%	11	1.70%
Right wing/elite conspiracy	1	1.40%	14.30%	0.20%	7	1.10%
Economic Other	3	4.20%	18.80%	0.50%	16	2.50%
Globalization	4	5.60%	9.50%	0.60%	42	6.40%
Maximizing profits	1	1.40%	16.70%	0.20%	6	0.90%
General greed (excessive compensation, etc.)	5	6.90%	20.80%	0.80%	24	3.70%
Reckless behavior of business	1	1.40%	16.70%	0.20%	6	0.90%
Abusive behavior of business	1	1.40%	12.50%	0.20%	8	1.20%
Rise in unemployment	1	1.40%	16.70%	0.20%	6	0.90%
Slow job growth	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	3	0.50%
Technology eliminating jobs	3	4.20%	8.80%	0.50%	34	5.20%
Unions demand too much	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1	0.20%

Unions declining in power	3	4.20%	12.50%	0.50%	24	3.70%
Stagnating wages	2	2.80%	4.70%	0.30%	43	6.60%
Inflation	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	21	3.20%
Luck	1	1.40%	11.10%	0.20%	9	1.40%
	72			11.00%	653	100.00%

APPENDIX E

TREATMENT RECOMMENDATION FRAMES BY YEAR

	Year 2006				2007			
	Count	% within Year	% within $Solutions	% of Total	Count	% within Year	% within $Solutions	% of Total
Solution Not Offered	26	20.00%	38.80%	5.10%	13	7.80%	19.40%	2.50%
Individual Other	1	0.80%	50.00%	0.20%	1	0.60%	50.00%	0.20%
Individual education attainment	3	2.30%	75.00%	0.60%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Work harder	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2	1.20%	100.00%	0.40%
Get/stay married/family planning	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1	0.60%	100.00%	0.20%
Make better decisions	1	0.80%	100.00%	0.20%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Individual philanthropy	1	0.80%	25.00%	0.20%	1	0.60%	25.00%	0.20%
Community action	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2	1.20%	66.70%	0.40%
Charity action	1	0.80%	100.00%	0.20%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Government Other	14	10.80%	23.70%	2.70%	20	12.00%	33.90%	3.90%
Tax cuts for wealthy/businesses (maintain cuts)	3	2.30%	9.10%	0.60%	14	8.40%	42.40%	2.70%
Tax cuts for middle class, progressive taxes, increases for wealthy	17	13.10%	22.70%	3.30%	19	11.40%	25.30%	3.70%
Create more jobs	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1	0.60%	20.00%	0.20%
Reform government aid programs (more aid)	6	4.60%	23.10%	1.20%	6	3.60%	23.10%	1.20%
Reform government aid programs	1	0.80%	14.30%	0.20%	4	2.40%	57.10%	0.80%

(less aid/require more work)								
Privatize social security/reduce benefits/raise retirement age	1	0.80%	33.30%	0.20%	1	0.60%	33.30%	0.20%
Protect/expand social security	2	1.50%	25.00%	0.40%	3	1.80%	37.50%	0.60%
Raise minimum wage	9	6.90%	60.00%	1.80%	2	1.20%	13.30%	0.40%
Boost economy	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2	1.20%	50.00%	0.40%
Improve school quality	7	5.40%	21.20%	1.40%	14	8.40%	42.40%	2.70%
Improve access to higher education	3	2.30%	15.80%	0.60%	10	6.00%	52.60%	2.00%
Control outsourcing, globalizaiton, etc.	5	3.80%	29.40%	1.00%	7	4.20%	41.20%	1.40%
Protect union/worker rights	3	2.30%	25.00%	0.60%	3	1.80%	25.00%	0.60%
Regulate business practices	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	4	2.40%	19.00%	0.80%
Health care reform	5	3.80%	13.90%	1.00%	14	8.40%	38.90%	2.70%
Business Other	3	2.30%	42.90%	0.60%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Regulate own practices	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Unsolvable Other	3	2.30%	60.00%	0.60%	2	1.20%	40.00%	0.40%
Result of capitalism	3	2.30%	30.00%	0.60%	5	3.00%	50.00%	1.00%
Result of human nature/condition	1	0.80%	25.00%	0.20%	3	1.80%	75.00%	0.60%
Not a problem Other	2	1.50%	28.60%	0.40%	4	2.40%	57.10%	0.80%
Does not really exist	6	4.60%	54.50%	1.20%	4	2.40%	36.40%	0.80%
Is a good thing	3	2.30%	42.90%	0.60%	4	2.40%	57.10%	0.80%
	130			25.40%	166			32.40%

	2008				2009			
	Count	% within Year	% within $Solutions	% of Total	Count	% within Year	% within $Solutions	% of Total
Solution Not Offered	14	11.90%	20.90%	2.70%	3	12.00%	4.50%	0.60%
Individual Other	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Individual education attainment	1	0.80%	25.00%	0.20%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Work harder	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Get/stay married/family planning	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Make better decisions	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Individual philanthropy	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1	4.00%	25.00%	0.20%
Community action	1	0.80%	33.30%	0.20%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Charity action	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Government Other	14	11.90%	23.70%	2.70%	3	12.00%	5.10%	0.60%
Tax cuts for wealthy/businesses (maintain cuts)	9	7.60%	27.30%	1.80%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Tax cuts for middle class, progressive taxes, increases for wealthy	19	16.10%	25.30%	3.70%	7	28.00%	9.30%	1.40%
Create more jobs	4	3.40%	80.00%	0.80%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Reform government aid programs (more aid)	6	5.10%	23.10%	1.20%	1	4.00%	3.80%	0.20%
Reform government aid programs (less aid/require more work)	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Privatize social security/reduce benefits/raise retirement age	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Protect/expand social security	2	1.70%	25.00%	0.40%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Raise minimum wage	4	3.40%	26.70%	0.80%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Boost economy	1	0.80%	25.00%	0.20%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Improve school quality	6	5.10%	18.20%	1.20%	1	4.00%	3.00%	0.20%
Improve access to higher education	1	0.80%	5.30%	0.20%	2	8.00%	10.50%	0.40%
Control outsourcing, globalizaiton, etc.	4	3.40%	23.50%	0.80%	1	4.00%	5.90%	0.20%
Protect union/worker rights	5	4.20%	41.70%	1.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Regulate business practices	8	6.80%	38.10%	1.60%	3	12.00%	14.30%	0.60%
Health care reform	12	10.20%	33.30%	2.30%	2	8.00%	5.60%	0.40%

Business Other	2	1.70%	28.60%	0.40%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Regulate own practices	1	0.80%	33.30%	0.20%	1	4.00%	33.30%	0.20%
Unsolvable Other	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Result of capitalism	2	1.70%	20.00%	0.40%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Result of human nature/condition	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Not a problem Other	1	0.80%	14.30%	0.20%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Does not really exist	1	0.80%	9.10%	0.20%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Is a good thing	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
	118			23.00%	25			4.90%

	2010					
	Count	% within Year	% within $Solutions	% of Total	Count	% of Total
Solution Not Offered	11	15.10%	16.40%	2.10%	67	13.10%
Individual Other	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2	0.40%
Individual education attainment	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	4	0.80%
Work harder	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2	0.40%
Get/stay married/family planning	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1	0.20%
Make better decisions	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1	0.20%
Individual philanthropy	1	1.40%	25.00%	0.20%	4	0.80%
Community action	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	3	0.60%
Charity action	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1	0.20%
Government Other	8	11.00%	13.60%	1.60%	59	11.50%
Tax cuts for wealthy/businesses (maintain cuts)	7	9.60%	21.20%	1.40%	33	6.40%
Tax cuts for middle class, progressive taxes, increases for wealthy	13	17.80%	17.30%	2.50%	75	14.60%
Create more jobs	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	5	1.00%

Reform government aid programs (more aid)	7	9.60%	26.90%	1.40%	26	5.10%
Reform government aid programs (less aid/require more work)	2	2.70%	28.60%	0.40%	7	1.40%
Privatize social security/reduce benefits/raise retirement age	1	1.40%	33.30%	0.20%	3	0.60%
Protect/expand social security	1	1.40%	12.50%	0.20%	8	1.60%
Raise minimum wage	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	15	2.90%
Boost economy	1	1.40%	25.00%	0.20%	4	0.80%
Improve school quality	5	6.80%	15.20%	1.00%	33	6.40%
Improve access to higher education	3	4.10%	15.80%	0.60%	19	3.70%
Control outsourcing, globalizaiton, etc.	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	17	3.30%
Protect union/worker rights	1	1.40%	8.30%	0.20%	12	2.30%
Regulate business practices	6	8.20%	28.60%	1.20%	21	4.10%
Health care reform	3	4.10%	8.30%	0.60%	36	7.00%
Business Other	2	2.70%	28.60%	0.40%	7	1.40%
Regulate own practices	1	1.40%	33.30%	0.20%	3	0.60%
Unsolvable Other	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	5	1.00%
Result of capitalism	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	10	2.00%
Result of human nature/condition	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	4	0.80%
Not a problem Other	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	7	1.40%
Does not really exist	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	11	2.10%
Is a good thing	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	7	1.40%
	73			14.30%	512	100.00%

APPENDIX F

EXAMPLE OF ARTICLE CODED FOR NEOLIBERAL SLANT

The New York Times

October 5, 2009 Monday
The New York Times on the Web

Inequality as Usual

BYLINE: By ROSS DOUTHAT

SECTION: Section ; Column 0; Editorial Desk; OP-ED COLUMNIST; Pg.

LENGTH: 846 words

Not long ago, liberals were insisting that **income inequality** was America's most serious economic problem.

Now there are more immediate crises: A 9.8 percent unemployment rate, a yawning budget deficit. But the **inequality** issue hasn't gone away.

The latest census figures show the gap between the wealthiest Americans and everybody else widening -- rather than shrinking, as some economists expected -- during the crash of 2008. An August report from Bank of America/Merrill Lynch suggested that middle-**income** Americans, buried in real-estate debt, will have to wait much longer than the rich to see their finances rebound.

This landscape will put liberalism to the test. Since Ronald Reagan was elected nearly 30 years ago, Democratic politicians have promised that their program could reverse the steady post-1970s growth of **income inequality** without sacrificing America's economic dynamism.

But having promised win-win, they may deliver lose-lose. In the short run, Barack Obama could preside over an America that's more economically stagnant and more stratified.

There's only so much that politicians can do about broad socioeconomic trends. The rise of a more unequal America is a vexingly complicated issue, whose roots may wind too deep for public policy to reach.

Liberals, though, have spent decades telling a more simplistic story, in which conservatives bear all the blame for stagnating middle-class wages and skyrocketing upper-class wealth. So it's fair to say that if a period of Democratic dominance doesn't close the gap between the rich and the rest of us, it will represent a significant policy failure for contemporary liberalism.

It's also fair to point out some reasons failure is a likely outcome.

For one thing, the lazy liberal's cure for **income inequality** -- soaking the wealthy with higher tax rates and cutting taxes for everybody else -- simply isn't going to happen.

In part, this is because the Democrats have become as much the party of the rich as the Republicans, and parties rarely overtax their own contributors. (That's why the plan to pay for health-care reform with a "surtax" on high earners found so many skeptics within the Democratic caucus.)

But it's also because soaking the rich only makes a difference on the margins. The federal **income** tax is already quite progressive, and our corporate tax rate is one of the highest in the West. To really create a more egalitarian America, we have to address trends that run deeper than the tax code. But many of these are issues that the Democrats are either unwilling or ill equipped to tackle.

For instance, **inequality** is driven in part by low-skilled immigration: it nudges wages downward for native workers, and the immigrants themselves are taking longer to achieve upward mobility than earlier generations did.

But today's Democrats, bent on consolidating the Hispanic vote, aren't likely to seek a lower immigration rate, or a better-educated pool of immigrants. The kind of "comprehensive" immigration reform that liberals support would probably increase low-skilled migration to the United States.

Inequality is also driven by the collapse of the two-parent household, which disproportionately affects the poor and working class, depriving them of the social capital they need to rise.

But today's Democratic Party increasingly represents "unmarried America" -- the single, the childless, the divorced. This makes it an unlikely vehicle for policies that discriminate, whether through tax code or the welfare state, in favor of the traditional nuclear family.

Inequality is perpetuated by our failing education system -- and especially by the bloated cartel responsible for educating the nation's poorest children. (If you want to understand **inequality** in America, start with last spring's Los Angeles Times series on what it takes to fire a lousy teacher in the Angeleno school system.)

But today's Democrats, the heroic efforts of some liberals notwithstanding, remain the party of the education bureaucracy, resistant to all but the most incremental efforts to bring choice and competition to our public schools.

There is, however, one way that a Democrat majority can plausibly bring down **inequality**: Just let government keep growing.

This is the lesson of Western Europe, where the public sector is larger and the **income** distribution much more egalitarian. The European experience suggests that specific policy interventions -- the shape of the tax code, the design of the education system -- may matter less in the long run than the sheer size of the state. If you funnel enough of a nation's gross domestic product through a bureaucracy, the gap between the upper class and everybody else usually compresses.

But economic growth often compresses along with it. This is already the logic of our current fiscal trajectory: ever-larger government, and ever-slower growth.

That combination could eventually create the more egalitarian America that Democrats have long promised to deliver. The question is whether Americans will thank them for it.

URL: http://www.nytimes.com

LOAD-DATE: October 5, 2009

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

DOCUMENT-TYPE: Op-Ed

PUBLICATION-TYPE: Newspaper

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APPENDIX G

EXAMPLE OF ARTICLE CODED FOR LIBERAL SLANT

The New York Times

June 11, 2007 Monday
Late Edition - Final

Economic Life After College

SECTION: Section A; Column 1; Editorial Desk; Pg. 18

LENGTH: 404 words

Commencement is a time for idealism.

But economic reality is lurking everywhere, and new college graduates are vulnerable to ambush. They have been told repeatedly that a college degree is an open sesame to the global economy. But that's not necessarily so, according to new research by two economists at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Frank Levy and Peter Temin.

It is true that people with college degrees make more money than people without degrees. The gap has narrowed somewhat in recent years, which is disturbing. But the earning power of college graduates still far outpaces that of less-educated workers.

The bad news, though, is that a college degree does not ensure a bigger share of the economic pie for many graduates. In recent decades, Mr. Levy and Mr. Temin show, only college-educated women have seen their compensation grow in line with economywide gains in productivity. The earnings of male college graduates have failed to keep pace with productivity gains.

Instead, an outsized share of productivity growth, which expands the nation's total **income,** is going to Americans at the top of the **income** scale. In 2005, the latest year with available data, the top 1 percent of Americans -- whose average annual **income** was $1.1 million -- took in 21.8 percent of the nation's **income,** their largest share since 1929.

Administration officials, and other politicians and economists, often assert that **income inequality** reflects an education gap. But Mr. Levy and Mr. Temin show that in the case of men, the average bachelor's degree is not sufficient to catch the rising tide of the global economy.

They argue that the real reason **inequality** is worsening is the lack of strong policies and institutions that broadly distribute economic gains. In the past, for example, a more progressive **income** tax and unions fostered equality. Affirmative action has also helped and probably accounts, in part, for the pay growth of college-educated women. But such institutions have been eroding and new ones have not yet emerged. At the same time, corporate norms that restrained excessive executive pay have also eroded, making the **income** gap even greater.

Mr. Levy and Mr. Temin conclude that only a reorientation of government policy can restore general prosperity. That's a challenge to the nation's leaders and today's graduates. America needs them to build the new institutions for a global economy.

URL: http://www.nytimes.com

LOAD-DATE: June 11, 2007

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

DOCUMENT-TYPE: Editorial

PUBLICATION-TYPE: Newspaper

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APPENDIX H

EXAMPLE OF ARTICLE CODED FOR NEUTRAL SLANT

The New York Times

July 13, 2006 Thursday
Late Edition - Final

Democrats Link Fortunes To Rise in Minimum Wage

BYLINE: By EDMUND L. ANDREWS

SECTION: Section A; Column 1; National Desk; Pg. 18

LENGTH: 933 words

DATELINE: WASHINGTON, July 12

Democrats, seeking to energize voters over economic issues in much the way that Republicans have rallied conservatives with efforts to ban same-sex marriage, have begun a broad campaign to raise the minimum wage and focus attention on **income inequality.**

The Democratic argument is straightforward: it has been more than eight years since Congress last raised the minimum wage, to $5.15 an hour, and inflation has reduced its real value to the lowest level in more than 20 years. At the same time, Democrats say, executive pay has risen to ever-higher levels and Congress has regularly approved pay raises for itself.

With midterm elections less than four months away, Democrats have begun state ballot initiatives to raise the minimum wage in more than a half-dozen states where Republicans are in danger of losing House or Senate seats.

The issue is playing a role in Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Arizona -- all states where Republican senators are fighting for survival.

Pressure is so high in Ohio that Senator Mike DeWine broke ranks with fellow Republicans last month and voted for a Democratic bill that would have raised the minimum wage to $7.15 an hour. The measure received 52 votes, a majority, but not the 60 votes needed to prevent a filibuster.

Democratic leaders in Congress are closely coordinating their efforts in Washington with campaigns in critical races around the country. Democratic lawmakers say they will try to block what is normally an automatic pay increase for members of Congress until Republicans agree to raise the federal minimum wage.

"We are putting some skin in the game," said Representative Rahm Emanuel of Illinois, chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee. "We're saying that there will be no pay increases for Congress until there's an increase in the minimum wage. This separates us from Republicans."

Last weekend, Mr. Emanuel held news conferences in five cities across upstate New York, with Democratic lawmakers and candidates signing pledges to oppose any increase in Congressional pay until the minimum wage is raised.

Republican lawmakers have repeatedly defeated increases in the minimum wage over the past eight years. Business groups, supported by many economists, have always fought such increases on the argument that setting wages above normal market levels will cause employers to cut back on hiring the very low-wage workers an increase would be intended to benefit.

"The minimum wage raises the take-home pay for some people at the expense of others," said Kevin A. Hassett, an economist at the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative policy group.

"It is wrong to redistribute money from the worse-off workers to other low-**income** workers."

For the most part, Republicans have sought to avoid debates about the minimum wage and focus on the overall strength of the economy. They note that unemployment is down to 4.6 percent, that the nation has added about 5.4 million jobs in the last three years and that wages have been climbing this year. Though most economists are dubious about the benefits of a minimum wage, the evidence of a link between a higher minimum wage and higher unemployment is mixed.

The unemployment rate among teenagers, a big share of minimum-wage workers, has remained above 13 percent ever since 2000 even though the minimum wage has gone down in real terms, after adjusting for inflation. Unemployment among people 16 to 19 has hovered around 15 percent this year.

Opponents of higher minimum wages contend that prosperity is best generated by stronger economic growth rather than by mandated wage levels. And while the minimum wage has lost about 20 percent of its buying power since the last increase, average hourly wages have done better.

According to the Economic Policy Institute, a left-of-center economic research group in Washington, "real" average hourly wages, adjusted for inflation, have edged up to $16.52 in May of this year from $15.58 in 1997.

In general, hourly wages have climbed much more slowly than productivity. Largely as a result, corporate profits have increased rapidly over the past several years and account for an unusually big share of the nation's total gross domestic product.

Senate Democrats, at a news conference here on Wednesday, said the minimum wage was long overdue for an increase and had lagged far behind prices for gasoline, health care and college tuition.

"We cannot sit by while minimum-wage workers see the real value of their wages decline," said Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton of New York. "We need to do right by hard-working Americans and raise the minimum wage."

Mrs. Clinton, a potential presidential candidate in 2008, traveled through Ohio on Sunday and Monday and talked up the issue as she campaigned for Representative Sherrod Brown, who is trying to unseat Senator DeWine this fall. On Monday, she spoke specifically about the minimum wage before a crowd of community activists.

Senator Charles E. Schumer of New York, head of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, said: "The average American thinks that the minimum wage ought to be raised, even if they are making more than the minimum wage. Far more importantly from a political viewpoint, it appeals to certain groups of people who don't usually turn out to vote."

Democratic strategists systematically looked for issues on which they could start statewide ballot initiatives that would increase voter turn-out among groups that were likely to vote Democratic. "Minimum wage was at the top of the list," Mr. Schumer said.

URL: http://www.nytimes.com

LOAD-DATE: July 13, 2006

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

GRAPHIC: Photo: Senators Hillary Rodham Clinton of New York, Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts and Robert Menendez of New Jersey, Democrats, before a news conference at the Capitol yesterday urging a wage increase. (Photo by David Scull for The New York Times)

PUBLICATION-TYPE: Newspaper

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